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Fun for Boys, No. 12, Published bi-monthly by Sports Publishers Limited, 2322 Dundas Street West, Toronto 8, Ontario, Canada. Authorized by arrangement with Educational Center, Inc., 225 Lafayette Street, New York 12, N.Y. Single copies \$1.00. Whole copies \$1.00. Department of Ontario, Ontario. Subscriptions, 10 issues for \$1.00. Printed in Canada.

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE-HEE! I SEE BY YOUR PALE WIDE-EYED FURR THAT YOU MANAGED TO SCROUNGE A DIME FOR MY MAG-MA-G! WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU YOUR MONEY'S WORTH ALL RIGHT! 'TISN'T ME AGAIN! *THE OLD WITCH*... MISTRESS OF THE MOUNT OF FEAR! SEE! ALREADY MY CAULDRON IS BUBBLING AND BOILING WITH ITS REETING BROW OF STARK TERROR! COME IN AND I'LL SERVE YOU UP A SAMPLE! GOT YOUR DRUD-CUPS FASTENED? GOOD! HERE GOES WITH THE HORROR-HELPING I CALL...

OOZE IN THE CELLAR?



SILAS THORNTON UNLATCHED THE CELLAR DOOR AND SWUNG IT OPEN! THE MUSTY OOD OF DAMPNESS AND DECAY WAITED UPWARD! SILAS'S WIFE, EMILY, SIGHED AS HER AGING HUSBAND STARTED DOWN THE CREAKING STEPS WITH THE CARRIER OF OLD CLOTHES IN HIS ARMS...

PLEASE, SILAS! THE CELLAR IS SO CLUTTERED ALREADY! PERHAPS THE MATRONS OF THE CHURCH NEXT DOOR COULD OUSE THE CLOTHES! WHY SAVE THEM?

IN THIS HOUSE, WE DON'T THROW AWAY ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL, EMILY! NEVER CAN TELL WHEN YOU MIGHT NEED SOME OLD RAGS!



SILAS REACHED THE FOOT OF THE STEPS AND LOOKED ABOUT THE CELLAR. WAS INDEED BLATTERED! THIRTY YEARS THEY'D LIVED IN THE HOUSE, AND FOR THIRTY YEARS THE COLLECTION IN THE CELLAR HAD GROWN! A NARROW PASSAGE LEADING TO THE PURNAGE WAS THE ONLY SPACE NOT FILLED! SILAS MOVED ALONG THE AISLE SEARCHING FOR A PLACE TO STOP. THE GARTONS' SMILEY'S VOICE DRIFTED DOWN TO HIM.

THAT CELLAR IS A SHAME, SILAS... A SHAME! IT... IT SMELLS FROM ALL THE JUNK DOWN THERE! IT SHOULD BE THROWN OUT... ALL OF IT!

WIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, SMILEY! I'M NOT THROWING ANYTHING OUT!



BEYOND THE CELLAR WINDOW, SO COVERED WITH DUST AND DIRT THAT SILAS COULD NO LONGER SEE THROUGH, VOICES AND LAUGHTER OF YOUNG CHILDREN AT PLAY ECHOED INTO THE SUNNY SUMMER AIR...

BLASTED BRAT! THEY'D BE GRABBY AT EVERYTHING WITH THEIR GREASY LITTLE Paws IF THEY HAD THE CHANCE!



SILAS'S GLANCE SWEEP ACROSS THE FILED-HIGH CELLAR! HERE AN OLD CANARY CAGE RUSTED, THERE A BROKEN PHOTOGRAPH WITH ITS ANCIENT HOOR-SPEAKER YARNED MAGAZINES, BOOKS, AND PAPERS LAY STACKED CRAZILY. COLUMN AFTER COLUMN... BUNDLES OF OLD CLOTHES, MILDWEDED AND MOTH-EATEN, ROTTED SILENTLY. AN OLD STUFFED CHAIR, SOGGY AND DECAYING, SQUATTED LOADED WITH EMPTY BOTTLES AND JARS.

WHY SHOULD THEY HAVE IT? I HAD GOOD MONEY FOR ALL THIS STUFF! IF I CAN'T SELL IT... I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE IT AWAY!



OLD LAMPS RUSTED OR DUST-LACED TABLES... CARTONS OF LEFT-OVER WALL PAPER ROLLS BARRED BESIDE SHEETS OF PAINT LONG-SINCE HARDENED... BROKEN SPRINGS AND TORN MATTRESSES, THEIR STIFFNESS POKE THROUGH... STOOD JAMMED AGAINST OLD TRUNKS PACKED WITH OLD FORGOTTEN ARTICLES! SILAS PUT THE CARTON OF OLD CLOTHES DOWN ON A MOUND OF WORN DISCARDED SHOES...

CAN'T TELL! SOMEDAY I MIGHT NEED SOMETHING DOWN HERE!



SILAS TURNED AND MOVED BACK ACROSS THE DIRT CELLAR FLOOR AND UP THE NICKEITY STEPS! OUTSIDE THE HOUSE, SMILEY STOOD AT THE SPED FENCE SILAS HAD PUT UP TO KEEP THE ORPHAN CHILDREN OFF HIS PROPERTY! THEY CROWDED AROUND HIM, ELMORING...



SILAS'S FACE WAS PURPLE WITH RAGE AS SMILEY CAME INTO THE HOUSE...

WHAT WERE YOU BRINGING THOSE BRATS?

JUST SOME APPLES THAT HAD FALLEN FROM THE TREE, SILAS! WE CAN'T EAT THEM ALL!



THEN GET SOME JARS FROM THE CELLAR AND CAN THEM! SAVE 'EM! WE CAN'T GIVE AWAY FOOD!



YES, SILAS!

THE CHILDREN AT THE ORPHANAGE KNEW ALL ABOUT THE COLLECTION IN SILAS'S CELLAR! ONCE, LONG AGO, ONE OF THE BRAVER BOYS HAD CLIMBED THE FENCE AND PEERED IN THROUGH THE SIXTY WINDOW! HIS TALE OF THE FABULOUS TREASURES STORED THERE HAD BEEN MARSHIFIED THROUGH THE YEARS...

AND A SHINY NEW PHONOGRAPH THAT'S NEVER EVEN BEEN PLAYED!

BOLLY! I WISH HE'D GIVE IT TO US! I LIKE TO HEAR MUSIC!



THE RAGGED CONDITION OF THE CLOTHES THE ORPHANS WERE DRESSED IN MADE SILAS'S CELLAR SOUND SO WONDERFUL...

BUNDLES OF CLOTHES... IN ALL COLORS... NEVER BEEN WORN! AND SHOES... PAIRS AND PAIRS OF POLISHED, GLEAMING SHOES!

SEE! WE COULD CERTAINLY USE THEM! LOOK... AT... SOM... MY SHOES!



FROM THE CHILDREN'S GOSSIPING, EVEN THE MATRONS OF THE ORPHANAGE WONDERED ABOUT SILAS'S CELLAR...

ONCE THEY'D EVEN GONE TO SILAS... TO ASK HIM IF HE'D GIVE THEM THE THINGS HE NO LONGER USED. THINGS THEY NEEDED SO DEPERATELY.

AND THE CHILDREN HAD FOUND OUT ABOUT THE RECEPTION SILAS HAD GIVEN THE WOMEN THAT RAN THE ORPHANAGE...



AND HE'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE EVEN NICE FURNITURE DOWN THERE!

MY! WE DO NEED FURNITURE BADLY!

GET OUT! GET OUT, YOU OLD HAG!

EACH FALL, THE APPLE TREE IN SILAS'S GARDEN BENT UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THE SUCULENT RED FRUIT! BUT SILAS REFUSED TO PART WITH ANY OF IT! IN THE CELLAR, JARS AND JARS OF HOME-CANNED APPLES LINED A COB-WEBBED SHELF.

BUT, SILAS! WE'LL NEVER USE UP THE APPLES I'VE ALREADY CANNED!



WHEN SILAS WAS NOT AROUND, THE CHILDREN WOULD BES EMLY TO INTERCEDE... TO MAKE SILAS GIVE THEM THE THINGS THAT HE'D HOARDED.

NO, CHILDREN! YOU'RE WRONG! THE THINGS THAT WE HAVE IN THE CELLAR ARE OLD! THEY'RE WORN AND RUSTED! YOU WOULDN'T WANT THEM!



W! YOU'RE JUST LIKE HIM! YOU'RE A WISER, TOO!

AND SO, THROUGH THE YEARS, AS THE CELLAR FILLED UP, EVEN EMILY CAME TO BELIEVE THAT THE JUNK IN THE CELLAR SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE CHILDREN! SHE RESENTED BEING CLASSED WITH HER FRUGAL HUSBAND AS A MISER! THAT'S WHY SHE BEGAN TO PUT THE APPLES TO THE CHILDREN WHEN SILAS WAS NOT AROUND...



HEMM! THEY'RE DELICIOUS, MR. THORNTON!

WHAT ABOUT THE CLOTHES, MR. THORNTON?

AND THE SHOES?



AND THE PHOTOGRAPH?

AND THE FURNITURE?

AND EMILY?

AND NOW SILAS HAD CAUGHT HER AT THE FENCE... GIVING THE CHILDREN THE RIPE RED APPLES! AND HE'D TELLED AT HER...



WE DON'T GIVE FOOD AWAY!

YES, SILAS!

EMILY SPENT THE REST OF THE DAY COOKING THE APPLES AND PREPARING THEM FOR CANNING! TOWARD EVENING SHE WENT DOWN INTO THE CELLAR FOR THE JARS! SHE SAID ABOUT AT THE ARRAY OF JUNK WITH TEAR-FILLED EYES.

THE CLOTHES... SOB... AND THE SHOES... SOB... AND THE PHOTOGRAPH...



EMILY'S FACE WAS PALE, NOW! HER EYES WERE WIDE AND STARRING! SHE SAW HER FINGER OVER THE PHOTOGRAPH HORN, TRACING TRACKS THROUGH THE DUST...

THE CHILDREN WOULD BE SO HAPPY... SO HAPPY!



ABOUT SUPPER TIME, SILAS MISSED EMILY! HE SEARCHED THE HOUSE FOR HER, FINALLY COMING UPON THE OPEN CELLAR DOOR!



EMILY! YOU DOWN THERE?

YES, SILAS!

WELL, COME UP, OY HEART! IT'S SUPPER TIME! I'M HUNGRY!



I'M NOT COMING UP; BLAST! NOT UNTIL YOU EMPTY THIS CELLAR AND GIVE THOSE CHILDREN ALL THESE WONDERFUL THINGS!

"YOU'RE CRAZY, EMILY! COME UP HERE AT ONCE!"

NO, SILAS! NOT UNTIL YOU DO AS I ASK!

SILAS EXPLODED! HE SLAMMED THE CELLAR DOOR SHUT AND SLAMMED THE BOLT CLOSED.

THEN STAY DOWN THERE, YOU IDIOT! STAY THERE ALL NIGHT FOR ALL I CARE!

I WILL, SILAS! YOU'LL SEE I'LL COME UP WHEN YOU PROMISE!

SILAS ATE COOKED APPLES FOR SUPPER THAT NIGHT! HE LISTENED FOR EMILY'S KNOCK FOR SOME SIGN THAT SHE'D RESENTED, BUT NONE CAME.

EMILY? I'M GOING TO BED! ARE YOU COMING UP?

NOT UNTIL YOU AGREE, SILAS!

SILAS STORMED OFF TO BED! HE WAS DETERMINED NOW TO TEACH EMILY A LESSON! IN THE MORNING HE ATE MORE COOKED APPLES FOR BREAKFAST...LISTENING AT THE CELLAR DOOR! NO SOUND CAME! FINALLY, HE COULD STAND IT NO LONGER! HE UNBOLTED IT AND SWUNG IT OPEN...

EMILY! IF YOU DON'T COME UP RIGHT NOW, I'M COMING DOWN TO GET YOU!

EMILY DID NOT ANSWER! A FETID ODOR BURNED SILAS'S NOSTRILS! HE CALLED AGAIN! STILL NO ANSWER! HE SHOUTED ANGRILY...

EMILY! STOP PLAYING! ANSWER ME!

A RAT SCURRIED ACROSS THE CELLAR FLOOR! THE STAIRS CREAKED AN OBJECTION AS SILAS DESCENDED SLOWLY...

EMILY! NO HELP ME, I'LL GOOD LORD!

EMILY WAS DEAD! AN OPENED JAR OF HOME-CANNED FOOD LAY BESIDE HER CHALK-WHITE BODY! ITS CONTENTS HAD BEEN HALF EATEN! THE ACID SWELL WAS STRONG! IT CAME FROM THE JAR!

THE FOOD! IT...IT SPOILED! SHE'S BEEN POISONED! SHE...SHE'S DEAD!

FEAR CLUTCHED AT SILAS'S HEART! HOW COULD HE EXPLAIN EMILY'S DEATH? THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO DO! SILAS GOT A SHOVE AND DUG A SHALLOW GRAVE IN THE DARK PASSAGEWAY, BETWEEN THE PILES OF JUNK.



"I'LL BET SHE WENT ON A TRIP!" NO!
"SHE LEFT ME..."

SILAS DRESSED EMILY'S BODY TO HER CELLAR GRAVE AND FISHED HER IN! HE PITCHED THE GRANKING DIRT DOWN UPON HER WHITE FACE.

THAT'S IT! SHE LEFT ME! SHE GOT DISGUSTED WITH THE WAY I KEPT THE CELLAR!



AND SO EMILY'S BODY WAS ADDED TO THE CLUTTER OF JUNK THAT FILLED THE CELLAR! OTHER BODIES WERE THERE, TOO! THE REMAINS OF AN UNFORTUNATE MOUSE THAT HAD FEASTED ON POISONED ROSEB-KILLER AND HAD CRUMBLED INTO A PILE OF EMPTY CANS ROTTED THERE.



IN SILAS'S CLUMSY EFFORTS TO BURY POOR EMILY, HE'D RICKED OVER THE SPOILED JAR OF FOOD! HE'D LEFT IT LAY AND A STRAY CAT THAT HAD WANDERED INTO THE CELLAR BY SOME OBSCURE OPENING HAD TASTED THE SPILLED CONTENTS! IT, TOO, LAY DECAYING UNDER A WORM-EATEN PILLOW.

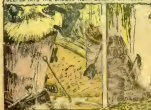


SILAS RARELY CAME DOWN TO THE CELLAR AFTER EMILY'S DEATH! THE SICKENING STENCH FROM BELOW GREW STRONGER AND STRONGER! AS WINTER DREW NEAR AND THE HOUSE GREW COLD, SILAS WAS FORCED TO GO DOWN TO START THE FIREPLACE...



PHEW! I COUNT TO GET SOME QUICK-LIME AND SPREAD IT OVER THE SPOT WHERE I BURNED EMILY!

THE FIREPLACE WAS FAULTY... ITS BOWEN LEAKED! A STEADY DRIP-DRIP-DRIP OF WARM WATER RAN DOWN FROM IT... ALONG THE SOIL-FLOOR PASSAGE... AND SEEPED INTO THE GROUND NEAR EMILY'S GRAVE...



AND SOMEDAY, AS IN A PREHISTORIC SWAMP, LONG, LONG AGO... THE WARMTH OF THE FIREPLACE, THE MOISTURE, THE DECAYING JUNK, THE ROTTED REMAINS OF CAT, MOUSE, AND EMILY... ALL OF THE STRANGE AND UNKNOWN CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR THE CREATION OF LIVING MATTER CAME ABOUT! A SMALL, PULSATING POOL OF QUIVERING LIFE SPREAD OVER THE DARK CROWDED CELLAR FLOOR.



LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE THROBBING THING
ABSORBED THE JUNK AROUND IT! THE OLD CANARY
CASE SUNK SLOWLY INTO THE LYING, GULFING
MASS, DISSOLVING AS IF IT WERE MADE OF SPUM
SUGAR...



...THE BUNDLES OF OLD CLOTHES...THE DECAYING
CHAIR...THE BOTTLES AND JARS...ALL MELTED
AWAY! AND THE THING GREW...



THE SHOES...THE OLD RUG...
THE CARTONS...EVERYTHING!
THE CELLAR...THE *ENTIRE*
CONTENTS OF THE CELLAR
WAS PULSED INTO *ONE SHY-
ERING, VIBRATING MASS*
OF LIVING Ooze...



AND STILL IT CONTINUES
TO GROW! THE CELLAR
STAIRS WENT NEXT! THE
GULFING PASTY MASS SUCKED
THEM IN AS FAR UP AS IT
COULD REACH! THE PILLARS
THAT HELD THE STAIRS HUNG
CRABBY, TOO...THEIR BASES
ABSORBED OUT FROM UNDER
THEM



THE PILES AND PILES OF MAGAZINES
AND BOOKS SLIPPED INTO THE SUCKING
SLOG AND DISAPPEARED...INTERGRATED
INTO IT! THE PHOTOGRAPH...



THE RUSTED LAMPS...THE BROKEN SPRINGS
AND TORN MATTRESSES...THE BUCKETS
OF DRIED PAINT AND WILDERED WALL
PAPER...THE TROCKS! THE SEWING,
QUIVERING MASS SWALLOWED THEM ALL...



UPSTAIRS, SILAS SHROOGER!
A CRAWLING SENSATION OF
HORROR GREPT UP HIS SPINE!
HE STOOD UP! HE STARED
AT THE CELLAR DOOR! FROM
BEYOND IT, A RUSTLING, ROLL-
ING SOUND CAME THROUGH
SOMETHING! SOMETHING'S
DOWN THERE! SOMETHING
MOVING! SOMETHING
ALIVE!



SILAS UNBOULDED THE CELLAR DOOR AND FLUNG IT OPEN! HE STARED INTO THE DARKNESS BELOW HIM...

WHO? WHO'S DOWN THERE?



HE TOOK THE KEROSENE LAMP FROM ITS HOOK ON THE WALL AND LIT IT! ITS BURNING GLOW REFLECTED UPWARD FROM THE THROBBING, PULSATING THING DOWNSTAIRS...

WHAT? WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S DOWN THERE?



SILAS TOOK ONE STEP DOWNWARD! HIS WEIGHT SPURTED THE UNBOLTED STAIRS! AS HE FELL FORWARD, HE SCREAMED HYSTERICALLY...



THE THING ENVELOPED SILAS, DISSOLVING THE FLESH FROM HIS BONES! HIS SHRIEKS OF PAIN DIED TO A WHISPER AND THEN SANK TO SILENCE! SILAS'S CLANNY CLUTCHING HAND WAS LAST TO SINK SLOWLY INTO THE QUIVERING GOO...

THE KEROSENE LAMP SPILLED ITS INFLAMMABLE CONTENTS OUT OVER THE LIVING CELLAR POOL AND IT BEGAN TO BLAZE! A NAUSEATING ODOR OF SEARED, CHARRED FLESH FILLED THE HOUSE! SOON THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE WAS ABLAZE...THE HOT FLAMES LEAPING WILDLY...

LOOK! HOLLY! OLD MUGGER THORNTON'S PLACE!

IT'S BURNING DOWN!



IN THE MORNING, ONLY A BLACKENED SKELETON OF THE HOUSE REMAINED! EVERYTHING WITHIN HAD BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED! THE CHILDREN OF THE ORPHANAGE PEERED AT IT THROUGH THE SPRINK FENCE, SAG-GERED...

SEE! ALL THOSE WONDERFUL THINGS IN HIS CELLAR!

BURNED UP! GONE!

AND WE COULD HAVE USED THEM, TOO!

HEE, HEE! THAT'S MY SERVING OF HORROR, KIDDIES! I HOPE IT WAS FAST ENOUGH FOR YOU! SO POOR OLD SILAS FINALLY WOUND UP AS PART OF THE JUNK IN HIS CELLAR, DID HE? HE MADE A FRASH OF HIMSELF IN THE END! HEE, HEE! WELL, THAT'S WHAT HE DISSOLVED! ONLY BY THE WAY! YOUR KNEES WILL DISSOLVE WHEN YOU GET MY SET! ACTUAL PHOTO! READ MY COLUMN, THE OLD WITCH'S NIGNE, TO FIND OUT HOW TO GET IT! AND NOW I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THAT OLD BARRAGE COLLECTOR, THE VAULT-KEEPER! HE'S WAITING WITH A SAMPLE FROM HIS COLLECTION! SEE YOU LATER!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! THIS IS YOUR HOST IN THE VAULT OF HORROR... THE VAULT-KEEPER... SPOOKING! NOW THAT THE OLD WITCH HAS FINISHED WITH HER PANTY-WAIST TARN... ICECLARS! WHEN!... I'LL TELL YOU A REAL HORROR STORY! THIS IS ONE THAT WILL MAKE YOUR HAIR STAND RIGHT UP ON END IF YOU HAVE ANY LEFT! (STILLY E.C. READERS DON'T!) IF IT WAS TOLD TO ME BY A RATHER 'ATTRACTIVE' YOUNG WOMAN! HERE IT IS IN HER OWN WORDS! SHE CALLS THIS SHIVERY TALE...

THE ACID TEST!



FLORENCE BLAIR! THAT'S MY NAME! I MARRIED GEORGE BLAIR TWO YEARS AGO! HE MADE A BIG FIBER OVER ME AFTER HE WERE INTRODUCED, AND WHEN HE ASKED ME TO MARRY HIM, I CONSENTED! I GUSS HE IMPLATED MY FEMALE EGG WITH HIS DEVOTION! ANYWAY HE WAS THE ONLY JENK WHO'D EVER POPPED THE QUESTION, AND I WAS SICK AND TIRED OF SCRATCHING A SPEND PAD AT THE TIME... SO WE GOT MICHES.

NO MORE WORKING FOR YOU, FLORENCE! FROM NOW ON, I'LL BE THE BREADWINNER! YOU JUST STAY HOME AND TAKE IT EASY!

GEORGE, DEAR! YOU'RE SO CONSIDERATE!



John
Foster

YEAH, HE WAS CONSIDERATE...ALL RIGHT? SO DISCOUNTINGLY CONSIDERATE THAT AFTER A COUPLE OF MONTHS OF MARRIAGE, HIS SLIGHT ATTENTION BEGAN TO GRATE ON MY NERVES! HE WAS THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN... THE SLOTH! HE TREATED ME AS IF I WAS ABOUT TO HAVE A BABY THE FOLLOWING WEEK...

WAIT, HONEY! DON'T? SIT DOWN YET! LET ME GET YOU A SUGARHOP!

OH... THANK YOU, DEAR!



OH, SURE? AT FIRST IT WAS REAL NICE! HE'D SLODLY AROUND THE APARTMENT GETTING ME WHATEVER I WANTED! ALL I'D HAVE TO DO WAS JUST CASUALLY MENTION IT...

WHOW... IT'S HOT! MUMMM! A COLD DRINK'D SURE BE THE SPOT RIGHT NOW!

WOULD YOU LIKE ONE, SWEETHEART? I'LL GET IT FOR YOU! JUST YOU SIT RIGHT THERE!



YOU'RE APPARENTLY SNEERING... SAYING, 'WHAT'S THIS SLODLY COMPLAINING ABOUT? SOME WOMEN WOULD GIVE THEIR LEFT ARM FOR A HUSBAND LIKE THAT!' WELL, TAKE IT FROM ME: KID! IT CAN BORE YOU... IT CAN BORE YOU STUFF...

IS IT TOO HOT FOR YOU, LAMB? HEE! SHALL I GET THE FAN?

AW, NEVER MIND, GEORGIE!



YOU JUST GO RIGHT INTO THE LIVING ROOM AND ASK, BART! I'LL DO THE Dishes TOMORROW!

THANKS...

YOU DUMB SLOD!



TOO GOOD FOR YOU, SUGAR! CAN I GET YOU A SUGAR? TURN UP THE HEAT? HUH?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 OH, LORD!



OH, LORD! IS RIGHT? AFTER A WHILE HE JUST STARTED TO RUN ME THE WRONG WAY! HE MOVERED ABOUT ME LIKE A MOSQUITO... DOING THIS... GETTING THAT! SOMETIMES I JUST BITT MY TEETH AND PLAYED HIS NOSE OFF AND SLOD ME ONE... JUST FOR A CHANGE...

EXCUSE ME, SAILOR! CAN I GET YOU YOUR BED ROOM SLIPPERS? HUM! IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT?

YEAH? JUST SIT THERE, AN' SHUT UP... YOU'RE DRINKIN'! NO, DEAR? NOTHING!



IT GOT SO I USED TO PROVIDE ARGUMENTS WITH HIM. ANYTHING FOR A LITTLE OVERDOSE! BUT EVEN THAT DIDN'T WORK! HE'D CLAM UP WHILE I RAGED AND THEN COME UP TO ME... SMILE SWEETLY... AND IT COULD'VE KILLED HIM FOR IT... APOLOGIES...

I WAS WRONG, FLORENCE! DON'T LETS ABOVE! I'LL BE CAREFUL NEXT TIME! FORGIVE ME PLEASE!

SHUT! OKAY! THE JERRY! HE DIDN'T EVEN DO ANYTHING!



IT WAS LIKE THAT FOR A WHOLE YEAR! ON OUR ANNIVERSARY HE BROUGHT ME A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS AND WE SAT AROUND ALL NIGHT... HIM WEISTFULLY REVISITING EVERY DELIGHTFUL MOMENT OF OUR PAST YEAR TOGETHER... AND ME DYING BY SECONDS...



THAT'S ALL I HAD TO SAY! AFTER THAT HE STARTED TAKING ME OUT TWICE...SOMETIMES THREE TIMES A WEEK! THE NIGHT OUT USUALLY CONSISTED OF A TWO-BIT MOVIE SHOW AND ICE CREAM IN A TEEN-AGER-JAMMED FOUNTAIN AFTERWARDS (TWO MONTHS OF THAT WAS ABOUT ALL I COULD STAND...



BUT DO YOU THINK HE GOT ~~MADE~~? DO YOU THINK HE BLEW UP? OH, NO? NOT GEORGE? NOT SWEET, DEVOTED, LOVE-SICK GEORGE? HE CAME OVER TO ME, PATTED MY CHEEK AFFECTIONATELY...I HAD TO CLENCH MY FISTS SO'S NOT TO SCRATCH HIS EYES OUT!...AND GRINNED...

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE A NIGHT OWL! WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING BEFORE THAT WHEN WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO? JUST SAY THE WORD!



HE TOOK ME! HE MUST'VE GONE INTO HOCK SHOP PAYING THE CHECK THEY CLAIMED HIM WITH! I DIDN'T CARE! AT LEAST IT WAS A CHANGE...

IT MUST HAVE COST A LOT TONIGHT, HUH, GEORGE?

IT DOESN'T MATTER, DEAREST! AS LONG AS YOU ENJOYED YOURSELF!



AND THEN IT HAPPENED! IT WAS ABOUT THREE MONTHS AGO! I'D BOUGHT A BOTTLE OF MURATIC ACID TO CLEAR SOME STAINS OFF THE BATHTUB! THAT STUFF IS REALLY POWERFUL! YOU HAVE TO USE RUBBER GLOVES OR IT'LL BURN YOUR SKIN OFF! ANYWAY, THERE I WAS, SCOURING AWAY...

HELLO, DARLING! HOW RAUCOUS?
I'M HOME EARLY TONIGHT! YES
HELLO, DEBBIE! I'M IN HERE!



FLORENCE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? OH, DEBBIE'S HATE TO SEE YOU ON YOUR HANDS AND KNEES LIKE THAT! HEART! LET ME DO IT!

COME ON! OUT IT! I'LL BE THROUGH SOON!



HERE, DARLING! GIVE ME THAT BOTTLE! I'LL FINISH UP! YOU GO REST!

LET GO, DEBBIE! I SAID I'LL BE THROUGH SOON!

YOU KNOW HOW I DISLIKE SEEING YOU WORK, LAMMY! PLE! GIVE ME THE BOTTLE!

DEBBIE! SO HELP ME...



SUDDENLY I SAW RED! I LOOKED AT HIS COOKER-SPANIEL FACE... WITH THOSE SAD EYES AND ANGELIC EXPRESSION... AND I SAW RED...

COME ON, SWEET! GIVE IT TO ME, NOW!

ALL RIGHT.



MY FACE WAS HOT! I COULD FEEL THE BLOOD POUNDING IN MY CHEEKS! ALL OF MY HATRED AND REPULSION TOWARDS DEBBIE WELLED UP INSIDE ME AND FINALLY EXPLODED! I PLUNGED THE OPEN BOTTLE OF ACID INTO THAT DISGUSTING, PASTY, DRY-SMILING FACE...

HERE! TAKE IT!
TAKE IT!

FLORENCE!



LONG, HE SCREAMED! THE STUFF WENT INTO HIS EYES... DRIPPED DOWN HIS CHEEKS... FROTHED ON HIS LIPS! HE FELL ON HIS KNEES, STARING AT ME WITH BLOODSHOT EYES, AND SCREAMED...



WHEN THE ANGLA GAME, THEY TOOK GEORGE AWAY I HEARD SOME TALK ABOUT DISFIGUREMENT AND BEING KILLED FOR LIFE, BUT I WAS TOO DAZED TO UNDERSTAND! I FINALLY WAS JOLTED OUT OF MY SPINNING WORLD BY A HEAVY HAND ON MY SHOULDER...



COME ALONG, MRS. BLAIR! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

THEY TOOK ME DOWN TO THE POLICE STATION AND BOOKED ME! THEY CHARGED ME WITH ASSAULT! THEY SAID IT'D HAVE TO STAND TRIAL! THEN THEY PUT ME BEHIND BARS! A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER, A GREASY LOOKING GUY CAME TO MY CELL...



GOOD EVENING, MRS. BLAIR! I'M YOUR LAWYER! I'VE BEEN ASSIGNED BY THE STATE TO DEFEND YOU!

GOOD MORNING! NOW YOU GONNA DEFEND ME? I DID IT, DIDN'T I?

HE GOT REAL CLOSE! I COULD SMELL THE LIQUOR ON HIS BREATH! DON'T BE A FOOL, MRS. BLAIR! I'VE BEEN TO SEE YOUR HUSBAND IN THE HOSPITAL!



HE'S BADLY BURNED, BUT HE'S ALL RIGHT!



FOO HAD!

HE STILL LOVES YOU, MRS. BLAIR! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THAT MEANS?



HUH? HE MAYBE YOU'D BETTER START TALKING SENSE, SALLY!

THE GREASY LAWYER TALKED! AND HE MADE GOOD SENSE! GEORGE, THE STUPID FOOL, COULDN'T BELIEVE IT! DASHED THE ACID IN HIS FACE ON PURPOSE! IN FACT, HE WAS GOING TO FLEND FOR ME AT THE TRIAL...



HE WHAT? HE'S GOING TO ASK THEM TO LET ME OFF!

THAT'S RIGHT! HE THINKS IT WAS JUST A LITTLE TEMPER FLAID-UP! AND THE ACID WAS UNFORTUNATELY IN YOUR HANDS AT THE TIME!

GEORGE! LOVE-SICK, DEVOTED, CONSIDERATE GEORGE! HE JUST COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT I HATED HIM ENOUGH TO SPLATTER HIM DELIBERATELY WITH ACID!



THE FOOL! THE IDIOT! I...

JUST PLAT ALONG, MRS. BLAIR! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ACT REPENTANT! SHOW THE JURY IT WAS JUST A LOVE'S QUARREL!

I SHOULDN'T RELISH THE THOUGHT OF GOING TO JAIL FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS, SO I AGREED TO DO WHAT THE MOUTHPIECE WANTED! AT THE TRIAL, CEDRIC WAS BRANDED INBANDAGED! HE'D BEEN BURNED BY THE ACID! BUT IT WAS THE SAME OLD SICKENING CEDRIC!



I LOVE THIS WOMAN... AND SHE LOVES ME! I SEE YOU! LET HER GO! I NEED HER NOW! WHAT SHE HAS DONE, SHE WILL SUFFER FOR... FOR THE REST OF HER LIFE! SHE WILL HAVE TO BARE ON MY FACE... SHE WILL HAVE TO SEE DAILY WHAT SHE HAS DONE!

HE GUMB SLOBS! AS IF ED HANG AROUND ONCE I WAS ADMITTED! BUT I PLAYED ALONE! I PUT ON A GOOD ACT...



WHAT MATTERS THE MOST IS THAT MY HUSBAND STILL LOVES ME! THAT'S ALL THAT COUNTS! YOU CAN PUNISH ME FOR MY MISTAKE IF YOU LIKE! ONLY, SOB, SOB, KNOWING CEDRIC... SOB... FORGIVES ME, IS ALL... SOB... THAT MATTERS!

THE "AMBULANCE CHASE" JUST KEPT NODDING MY HEAD AND SMILING WHILE I POKED OUT THE TEARS! I WAS SENSATIONAL! WHY, ONE BROAD IN THE JURY EVEN STARTED TO BAWL, I WAS SO CON-VINCING! WHEN THE VERDICT CAME IN...



WE, THE JURY, FIND THE DEFENDANT... NOT GUILTY!

THE LAWYER WAS SHAKING MY HAND AND CEDRIC WAS AT MY SIDE, STUMBLING AROUND, CLAWING AT MY SLEEVES...



COME HOME NOW, FLORENCE! IT'S ALL OVER! Y-YEAR, CEDRIC!

I LOOKED AT THE LAWYER QUESTIONINGLY! HE HENT OVER AND WHISPERED...



YOU'D BETTER GO ALONG! MAKE IT LOOK GOOD!

YEAR! I GET IT!

COME, CEDRIC, DEAR! I'LL TAKE YOU HOME!

WHEN WE GOT TO THE APARTMENT, CEDRIC SAT DOWN WEARILY... STARING BLANKLY AHEAD THROUGH THE SMOKED GLASSES TAPED ON HIS BANDAIDED HEAD...



CAN I GET YOU SOMETHING, CEDRIC?

NO, FLORENCE! JUST COME SIT BY ME FOR A WHILE!

HE TOOK MY HAND IN HIS! A COLD SHIVER CRAWLED UP MY SPINE AT HIS SLIMY TOUCH! I TRIED TO DRAW MY HAND AWAY, BUT HE HELD IT FAST! I NEVER KNEW HE WAS SO STORMY...



CEDRIC!

WHAT'S WRONG, FLORENCE? AM I REPULSIVE TO YOU? WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE WHAT YOU DID TO ME?

HE STARTED TO UNWIND THE BANDAGES WITH HIS FREE HAND! I LOOKED AWAY! HIS FINGERS BURNED MY WRISTS...



YOU'RE NOT LOOKING AT ME, FLORENCE! I CAN TELL! LOOK AT ME! SEE WHAT YOU DID?

NO, GEDRID! NO! I...

THEN I LOOKED! MY GOD, I LOOKED! I ALMOST THREW UP AT WHAT I SAW! HIS FACE WAS HORRIBLY DISTORTED... HIS SKIN BURNED AND SCARRED... HIS EYES: TWO BLACK HOLES...



PHETIE, ISN'T IT, FLORENCE? TELL ME YOU STILL LOVE ME, FLORENCE! TELL ME!

GEDRID! PLEASE! PLEASE!

HE PULLED ME TOWARD HIM! I WAS FILLED WITH LOATHING AND DISGUST! HIS BULSTERED LIPS WERE CLOSE TO MINE! I COULD ALMOST SMELL THE ACID-BURNED FLESH...



YOU TOLD THEM AT THE TRIAL YOU STILL LOVED ME! SHOW ME YOU DO! KISS ME!

GEDRID! STOP IT! LET ME GO!

HE HELD MY HANDS IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP! I COULDN'T GET LOOSE! WITH HIS FREE HAND HE REACHED INTO HIS POCKET AND PULLED OUT A BOTTLE... A BOTTLE OF BURNING ACID...



DO YOU KNOW WHY I PLEASED FOR YOU AT THE TRIAL, FLORENCE? BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT THEM TO PUT YOU IN JAIL! THEN I COULDN'T HAVE MY REVENGE!

GEDRID! OH, LORD...

HE PUT THE BECK OF THE BOTTLE INTO HIS SCARRED DEFORMED MOUTH AND UNSCREWED THE CAP! HE SAW IT GULF, LICKING...



IT'LL BE AGEE HERE, FLORENCE! JUST THE TWO OF US... TOGETHER! JUST LIKE IT WAS... BEFORE.

THE ACID SPLASHED INTO MY FACE, BURNING THE SKIN! RED-HOT FLAMES SEEMED TO LICK AT MY CHEEKS! SEARING PAIN SHRIEKED INTO MY EYES! AS THE BLACKNESS CLOSED IN, GEDRID'S FACE CAME AT ME... HIS SIGHTLESS EYES SMILING! HIS BULSTERED LIPS CLOSED ON MINE AS I PASSED OUT SCREAMING...



FROM THEE

HER, HEN? WELL, EDDIE? I HOPE YOU LIKED FLORENCE'S FORWARD TALE OF LOVE! I HOPE IT DIDN'T SET TO HOT FOR YOU! SHE TOLD IT TO ME FROM A HOSPITAL BED! BEFORE I LEFT HER, I PEEKED UNDER THE BATH-DESK! UGH! SHE WAS ALMOST AS UGLY AS ME! AND YOU CAN SEE HOW UGLY THAT IS BY SENDIN' FOR MY PHOTO! THE OLD BITCH TELLS HOW YOU CAN GET IT IN HER COLUMN, THE OLD BITCH'S AGREE! IT FOLLOWS THE TEXT WHICH FOLLOWS ME!



NIGHTMARE!

This last week had been a *nightmare*, John Bradbury thought to himself as he lay rest and sleepless in the darkened bedroom. Ever since he had brought his young bride to their new home, a ghastly succession of events had transpired... events so horrible that John Bradbury was beginning to question his own sanity.

First there had been the *canary*... its cage smashed open and its neck mangled! Bradbury had decided with a shudder that the cat had gotten to it. *That* theory had survived for just one night! Then the cat, itself, had been discovered in the basement... its throat ripped open and the blood drained from the grotesque corpse!

For three nerve-wracking days, he and Ruth had closely watched their Airedale. It must have been *Tippy*, Bradbury concluded with revulsion... he had suggested destroying the dog immediately, but it was Ruth's animal and fearfully she defended it. She had beseeched him to wait... couldn't they allow time for Tippy's innocence to manifest itself?

And then, just the night before, Bradbury had been awakened in the early hours of the morning by Ruth's hideous screams. There, in the hallway, not more than a yard from their own bedroom, was the dog's face-suffening body... on its throat the terrible evidence of a vampire's teeth!

It had been a week of nightmare, John Bradbury thought to himself, as he lay stiff and sleepless in the darkened room. The cat and the canary and the dog... all victims of a force which was too gruesome for the human mind to comprehend. Some awful power held this house in its grasp... or was the perpetrator of these harrowing incidents someone

who lived *here*? With a choking sob John Bradbury thrust the thought from his mind... there must be some *other* explanation!

A sudden sound electrified him: the door knob was turning and a glimmer from the hallway probed into the bedroom. He felt the tension pressing in around him like a smothering shroud... there, walking towards him and looking almost ghostly in the eerie light, was Ruth Bradbury.

Suddenly the terrible truth was so obvious that it was all Bradbury could do to restrain himself from shouting it aloud. The *vampire*... the ghoul-like monster who swallowed its victim's blood... must be his *own wife*! There could be no other explanation... and she was coming now to claim her next victim!

Now she was peering down at him with glittering eyes and, in that moment, he sat bolt upright in bed, no longer able to feign sleep. Fear such as he had never known before shuddered through his body and set his limbs tremble. Ruth's face was coming closer and closer...

In that second of supreme desperation his mind went blank and he felt himself whirling helplessly down a long murky corridor... spinning... careening wildly. It may have been seconds later... or could it have been *aeons*?... that he recovered consciousness. There had been a strange familiarity to his blanking-out... was it possible that Ruth had been poisoning or drugging him in order to get him out of the way?

Slowly he opened his eyes. There, at the foot of the bed, Ruth leered at him... her mouth twisted in a savage leer. On her throat were the unmistakable marks of the savage VAMPIRE!

And on the trembling fingers which John Bradbury held before his unbelieving eyes was the warm sticky blood of his latest victim... the blood which he must have *won* from his lips just seconds after he had... *his own wife*!

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HERE'S A TALE THAT SHOULD
DRIVE YOU BUGS! I CALL IT...

EXTERMINATION



RALPH SLAMMED HARD ON THE BRAKES AND HIS SMALL PANEL TRUCK SCREELED TO A STOP BEFORE THE WHITE HOUSE! HE STEPPED OUT, SQUINTING AT THE GRASS HUMBERS TACKLED ON THE FRONT BOOM OF THE DWELLING, AND SMILED.

"TWELVE-TWENTY-ONE! THIS IS THE PLACE!"



RALPH TURNED NEARLY AS HE MADE HIS WAY BACK TO THE REAR OF THE TRUCK. UNLATCHED THE TWO DOORS, AND PULLED THEM TOWARD HIM! INSIDE, A CLUSTER OF CANS, BOXES, TUBES, NOZZLES, PUMPS, AND OTHER ASSORTED EQUIPMENT LAY STICKED HEAVILY! ON THE SIDE OF THE TRUCK, IN LARGE SCREAMING LETTERS, WERE THE WORDS, "AAAH EXTERMINATORS!"

"THANK HEAVENS THIS IS MY LAST STOP TODAY! I'M BORNED!"



A WIDE-EYED, PALE-FACED, MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN PEERED AT RALPH FROM BEHIND THE CURTAINS AS HE MOVED UP THE WALK TO THE FRONT DOOR. RALPH GRINNED BACK AT HER AND SHE DISAPPEARED! THEN THE DOOR OPENED AND SHE STOOD THERE EMBARRASSED.



GOODNESS GRACIOUS! DID YOU HAVE TO PARK YOUR TRUCK RIGHT IN FRONT? NOW ALL THE NEIGHBORS WILL KNOW!

HUNT! AH, COME ON, LADY! IT AIN'T NO CRIME TO HAVE BED-BUGS!

THE WOMAN'S FINGER SHOT TO HER LIPS AND SHE LOOKED UP AND DOWN THE STREET, HER FACE FLUSHING BEET-RED.



SH-OW-OW! DON'T TALK SO LOUD! SOMEONE WILL HEAR YOU COME IN!

YEAH! WHERE'S THE BEDROOM, HUN?

THE WHITE-FACED LADY CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND RALPH AND TOOK ONE LAST LOOK OUT OF THE CURTAINED WINDOW! THEN SHE POINTED A THIN ARM...



IN THERE? IS IT GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT?

DON'T KNOW YET! GOTTA SEE FIRST!

RALPH STAMPEDED INTO THE BEDROOM AND APPROACHED THE BED! HE FLUNG THE MATTRESS BACK AND STUDIED IT CAREFULLY.



YEAH, YOU GOT 'EM, LADY! BUT GOOD!

I KNOW! THEY THEY BITE!

BITE! THEY SUCK YOUR BLOOD, THAT'S WHAT THEY DO! LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE IN THE TURTLES AND FOLDS OF THIS MATTRESS!

CAN YOU KILL THEM?



ARE YOU FUDGING, LADY? DIDN'T YOU READ THE SIGN ON MY TRUCK? I'VE KILLED MORE BED-BUGS, ROACHES, ANTS, RATS, MICE, MOTHS, TERMITES AND OTHER PESTS THAN ANY OTHER EXTERMINATOR IN THIS TOWN!



YOU SAY THAT LIKE YOU CAN ENJOY KILLING THEM!

THE SMILE FADED ON RALPH'S FACE AND HIS EYES GREW DARK! HE GRIMACED AT THE INFESTED MATTRESS, ANGRY.

YOU BET I ENJOY KILLING 'EM! I HATE 'EM! HATE 'EM!

ER, AH, YES! I I SEE! ER, HOW DO YOU KILL BED-BUGS, MR. MR.



FOR A MOMENT, RALPH WAS BLIND, STARRING AT THE BED WITH WIDE GLARING EYES! THEN THE CLOUD LIFTED FROM HIS FACE AND HE SMILED...

HUH? OH! MY NAME'S RALPH MELLOW! YOU CAN CALL ME RALPH, LADY!

HOW DO YOU KILL BED-BUGS, RALPH?

ALL ACCORDING! IF THEY'RE INSIDE THE MATTRESS, WE CAN STEAM 'EM OUT! THEY CAN'T TAKE ANYTHING OVER 125 DEGREES! AS FOR THE FOLDS AND TUFTS, A SPRAY OF DDT WILL WIPE 'EM OUT!

IN THE MATTRESS? OH, DEAR!

AW! YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY, LADY! THEY'RE NOT INSIDE THIS MATTRESS! I LOOKED IT OVER! WELL! GOTTA GET TO WORK!

WHILE RALPH BEGAN TO SPRAY THE MATTRESS WITH THE LETHAL DDT, HE CONTINUED TO CHATTER TO THE WOMAN...

TERMITES IS FUN TO KILL! YOU GIVE 'EM A CLOUD OF CYANIDE GAS! WHOOPS! 'EM FOR A LOOP!

CYANIDE GAS!

YEP! GOOD FOR ANTS, TOO! NOW COCKROACHES IS TOUGHEN! GOTTA DUST THEM WITH SODIUM FLUORIDE OR POWDERED BORAX TO KILL 'EM!

UHH! I HATE COCK-ROACHES!

JAPS! THEY'RE THE HARDEST! THEY'RE SMART, THOSE BASTARDS! POISONED BAIT'S GOOD FOR THEM UNTIL THEY GET WISE AND AVOID IT! THEN YOU GOTTA CHANGE THE BAIT... AND THE POISON!

YOU MEAN THEY KNOW AFTER A WHILE?

YOU SAID IT! THEY'RE SMART! ONCE I MADE AN ELECTRIC TRAP, YOU KNOW, KILL 'EM WITH AN ELECTRIC SHOCK! NOT ONE JNATS ALL! THE REST OF 'EM STEERED CLEAR! ONLY GOT ONE WHEREVER I WENT WITH THE THING! AFTER ONE IN EVERY PLACE, THEY KNEW!

DEAR ME! I NEVER KNEW THERE WAS SO MUCH TO EXTERMINATING PESTS!

RALPH PUT THE DOT BOMB INTO HIS KIT AND LIT A CIGARETTE! HIS EYES SPARKLED, AS IF HE'D JUST BEEN THROUGH A DELICIOUS EXPERIENCE.

YEP! THERE'S PLENTY YOU TO EXTERMINATE! MY I LOVE IT!



RALPH'S FACE BRIGHTENED! HE BEAMED...

YEAH! I LIKE TO KILL 'EM! IT MAKES ME FEEL GOOD! I MUSTA KILLED... MAYBE... A THOUSAND BED-BUGS... JUST NOW!



HIS EYES WERE WIDE AND STARRING NOW...

BET I'VE KILLED A MILLION COCKROACHES! TEN THOUSAND RATS! HALF-A-MILLION BED-BUGS... TEN MILLION ANTS...

ARE YOU FINISHED, RALPH?



THAT NIGHT, WHEN RALPH MELLON... EXTERMINATOR... GOT HOME, HE DUNK WEARILY INTO A CHAIR! HE SAT THERE FOR A WHILE STARING BLANKLY AHEAD OF HIM! THEN HE BURST OUT LAUGHING...

CRABBY DANET CALLED ME A SADIST! SAID I LIKE TO INFLICT PAIN ON OTHER CREATURES! AS IF A DOG CAN FEEL ANY PAIN!



RALPH SAT THERE FOR A WHILE, CHUCKLING! THEN A MOVEMENT CAUGHT HIS EYE! SOMETHING MOVING ACROSS THE FLOOR... BEFORE HIM...



WHAT? A COCKROACH!

RALPH JUMPED UP! HE STRODE OVER TO WHERE THE SLIMY BROWN COCKROACH HAD HABITATED ON THE FLOOR, SWEEPING ITS FEEDERS ABOUT FROM RIGHT TO LEFT... AS IF IT REMOVED IMPENDING DANGER! RALPH'S EYES GLARED! A GRUEL SMILE CROSSED HIS HARD-FACE! HE RAISED HIS FOOT... SLOWLY...



IN A MINUTE, COCK-ROACH, YOU'RE GONNA BE BASHED MUSH!

RALPH BROUGHT DOWN HIS HEEL ON THE STICKY BROWN BACK OF THE COACH, BRINDING THE INSECT INTO THE FLOOR! THE CRACKLE OF ITS SHELL-LIKE BODY WAS SUDDENLY GROWNED OUT BY AN EERIE, SPLITTING SHRIEK...



GOOD LORD! THE COACH! THE COACH SCREAMED!

IT WAS AS IF THE SCREEN HAD BEEN A SIGNAL!...
SUDDENLY THE WALLS ABOUT RALPH WERE
FILLED WITH THE SCRATCHING PATTY OF THOU-
SANDS OF CLAWED TOES...

WHAT'S THAT?
RATS?



AND THEN THE RUNNING STARTED! THE DRONE
OF HUNDREDS UPON HUNDREDS OF PAIRS OF
WINGS...

MOTHS!
THOUSANDS
OF 'EM!



THEN THE TERMITES POURED
FROM THE WOODWORK! BILLIONS
OF THEM... STREAMING TOWARDS
HIM...

TERMITES? THEY'RE
AFTER ME!



AND THEN THE ROACHES AND
THE ANTS CAME... FROM THE
CRACKS IN THE FLOOR! THEY
KEPT COMING... AND COMING...

I'VE GOT TO GET OUT
OF HERE!



RALPH TURNED TO RUN... BUT TEN
THOUSAND RATS BARRED THE WAY.
THEIR KNIFE-LIKE TEETH GLEAM-
ING...

OH, LORD! I'M
SURROUNDED!



A SWARM OF BED-BUGS CRAWLED FROM THE
MATTRESS... MOVING TOWARDS RALPH...

BED-BUGS? MILLIONS
OF THEM!



THE RUNNING BEW BEAVERING! A CLOUD OF
MOTHS HURLED AT RALPH, LANDING ON HIS
ARMS, HIS LEGS, HIS BACK...

HELP! THEY'RE EATING AWAY
MY CLOTHES!



RALPH STARTED TO RUN BUT THE RATS WERE UPON HIM! THEIR SLASHING TEETH OUT INTO HIS ANKLES! HE WENT SPRAWLING...

AAAAAAAAAAAAA!



THE BEDRONESS POUNED OVER HIM, SUCKING HIS BLOOD...SUCKING...SUCKING! HE FELT WEAK...

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE



THE RATS, TEARING AT HIS FLESH...THE TERRIBLE, GRILLING INTO HIS BONES...THE ELECTRIFYING SENSATION OF THEIR BURNING...

OH, LORD! THEY'RE KILLING ME!



AND THEN RALPH WAS AWAKE! HE SAT BOLT-UPRIGHT IN HIS CHAIR AND STARED ABOUT HIM! HE WAS COVERED WITH PERSPIRATION! HE BREATHED A SOAR OF RELIEF...

THANK GOD! IT WAS ONLY A DREAM! A HORRIBLE DREAM!



RALPH SAT THERE FOR A WHILE, CHUCKLING! THEN A MOVEMENT CAUGHT HIS EYE! SOMETHING MOVING ACROSS THE FLOOR BEFORE HIM...

WHAT? WHAT? A COCKROACH!



RALPH JUMPED UP ANGRILY! ALL HIS PENT-UP EMOTION FROM THE DREAM HE'D JUST EXPERIENCED SPILLED OVER! ENRAGED, HE STRODE TO WHERE THE SLIMY BROWN INSECT HAD HESITATED...

SCREAMING COCKROACHES! BAN!



RALPH BROUGHT HIS HEEL DOWN ON THE STICKY BACK OF THE ROACH, GRINDING THE CRACKLING SHELL-LIKE BODY INTO THE FLOOR! SUDDENLY, FEAR CLUTCHED AT RALPH MELLOW'S HEART... CRAWLING, COLD FEAR! THE COCKROACH WAS SHRIEKING...

GOOD LORD!



WELL, KIDNERS! THIS IS WHERE WE CAME IN! SUPPOSE WE LEAVE RALPH (AND HIS INEVITABLE END!) TO THE BUGS... AND GO ON TO OTHER THINGS! LIKE FOR EXAMPLE, THE CRYP-KEEPER, WHO IS WAITING TO TELL YOU HIS HORROR STORY! ER... WHAT'S THAT YOU ASK?

WHAT HAPPENS TO RALPH? WHY IS IT SO SIMPLE?

THE ENTERTAINMENT GETS ENTERTAINED BY ALL THE PESTS HE ONCE PESTERED! DOESN'T THAT GIVE YOU A CRAW-LEELY FEELING? IT'S SO SO QUANT! BYE, NOW!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! YEP! IT'S YOUR HOST IN HORROR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, AGAIN... WELCOME! HEADING TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR? COME IN! SIT DOWN NEXT TO ME AND I'LL ENTERTAIN YOU WITH ONE OF MY TERRIFIC TALES GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOUR BLOOD FREEZE IN YOUR VEINS! THIS TIME I'VE CHOSEN, FROM MY JEALOUSLY GUARDED COLLECTION OF BLOOD-SUCKLERS, A FAVORITE OF MINE CALLED...

**EAR TODAY...
GONE TOMORROW!**



A GENTLE MAJID WIND SHEPT LIGHTLY OVER THE GRAVESTONES, CARRESSING THEIR TIME-WORN FACES! BEYOND THE-HASTING IRON-FENCE THAT KEPT INTERDERS FROM DISTURBING THOSE WHO SLEPT BELOW THE THAWING GROUND... A RAMSHAGGLE FACTORY BUILDING LOOMED... BLACK AND SILENT AGAINST A CHILLY GRAY SKY! ACROSS ITS PAINT-PEELED WALL, FADING LETTERS READ...





HEH, HEH! I SEE BY YOUR
LEERING FACES, KIDNERS, THAT
YOUR FIENDISH IMAGINATIONS
ARE ALREADY RUNNING WILD
FROM JUST READING THE
FIRST PANEL! WELL, TAKE
IT EASY, CRIMES! IT'S
MY STORY... NOT YOURS!
TO GO ON...



IN THE OFFICE OF THE DUND
AND UNDER FERTILESTER COM-
PANY, IRWIN DUND, THE
SENIOR PARTNER, SHOUTED
HOARSELY INTO A PHONE.

I TOLD YOU, STE! YOU'LL
GET YOUR MONEY! JUST
GIVE ME A FEW MORE
DAYS! THAT'S ALL I...



IRWIN TURNED... RED-FACED...
AND STARED AT HIS JUNIOR
PARTNER, ELLIOT UNDER...

HE HUNG UP
- ON ME!

WHAT?
CALL HIM
BACK!



IT'S NO USE, ELLIOT!
IT WOULDN'T DO ANY
GOOD! STE JUST
WON'T GIVE US ANY
MORE CREDIT! HE
WANTS TO BE PAID!

BUT, THIS
ORDER! IF WE
COULD FILL
IT, WE'D GET
HIS MONEY!



WHAT
ORDER?

THIS ONE! IT CAME IN THIS
MORNING! A RUSH! ONE
THOUSAND POUNDS OF
BONE-MEAL FERTILIZER!
NOW CAN WE FILL IT IF
HE WON'T SELL US THE
SCRAP BONES?



IRWIN SCRATCHED THE WHITE SHEET OF
PAPER FROM ELLIOT'S HAND...

LET'S SEE THAT ORDER!
HMMM! ONE THOUSAND
POUNDS... BONE-MEAL...
DELIVERED MONDAY!
MONDAY! IMPOSSIBLE!
TODAY IS FRIDAY!

IF WE CAN'T
LOCATE ANOTHER
SCRAP WHOLESALER
TO SELL US THE
BONES TODAY,
WE'LL LOSE
THE ORDER!



STOP PIPE-DREAMING!
YOU KNOW NO OTHER
SCRAP-DEALER IN TOWN
WILL SELL TO US ON
CREDIT! STE WAS
OUR ONLY CHANCE,
AND HE WON'T GIVE
US ANY MORE! HE
JUST SAID SO!
YOU HEARD...

ELLIOT! THAT
ORDER COULD PUT
US OUT OF THE
RED IF WE HAD
THE STUFF TO
FILL IT, BUT
WELL, I THINK
I KNOW WHERE
WE CAN GET
IT!

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! SO YOU GUESSED IT ALL THE TIME! SO YOU'RE *REAL* SLEVER! SO GIVE A CHANCE! LOOK! THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY! THERE'S A HIDDLE AND AN END! LET'S GO ON.



IRWIN STARED OUT OF THE OFFICE WINDOW AT THE RUN-DOWN OLD CEMETERY LYING IN THE SHADOWS OF THE FACTORY BUILDING.

IRWIN! WHAT IS BLAZED ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT WHERE CAN YOU GET IT?

COME HERE... TO THE WINDOW!



IRWIN POINTED OUT AT THE CROOKED WEATHER-BEATEN BRISTLESTONE.

THERE!

WELL? THE CEMETERY! GOOD LORD!



WHAT'S WRONG, ELLIOTT AFRAID THAT'S A VERY OLD CEMETERY!



YES! HISTORIC! IF ANYONE FOUND US DIGGING IT UP, THEY'D LOOK US UP AND THROW AWAY THE KEY! I KNOW THE FOLKS IN THIS TOWN! THEY'RE PROUD OF THAT ANCIENT LANDMARK!

BESIDES! THEY SAY THAT GRAVEYARD IS HAUNTED! ONCE A GRAVE-ROBBER WAS FOUND... STRANDED NEAR A GRAVE HE'D OPENED! HE'D BEEN CHOKED TO DEATH! THEY SAID THE GHOST DID IT!



DON'T SOME OTHER GRAVE-ROBBER PROBABLY COME ALONG! THAT'S JUST A STORY THEY BOORED UP TO SCARE PEOPLE!

AND YOU DON'T THINK FOR ONE MINUTE THAT WE'D *DO* UP THE TONES WE NEED WHERE WE'D BE *SEEN*, DO YOU?



WELL, NOW *ELSE* CAN HE GET THEM?



SIMPLE! WE FURNISH TO THEM FROM THE *RELIQU* OF THIS FACTORY! WE COULD TAKE ALL WE NEED AND NO ONE WOULD BE THE WISER!



TURKEY! I NEVER THOUGHT OF THAT!



WEN WEN? NEITHER DO YOU, EH, FIEDDIE? YOU... DID? HUH? I MUST BE *SLEEPING*? WELL, LET'S GO AHEAD WITH OUR BRIBESOME LITTLE TALE AND SEE IF I CAN *GUTSMART* YOU! READY? GOOD? THAT NIGHT...



...THE SOUND OF A SPADE STRIKING SOFT EARTH ECHOED THROUGH THE EMPTY FACTORY! A GAPING HOLE TARNISHED IN THE CELLAR WALL! THE TUNNEL HAD BEEN *STARTED*...

THIS IS... UGH... SLOW WORK... IRWIN? I DON'T THINK WE CAN... DO IT... BY MONDAY!

DON'T WORRY! WE'LL BE THROUGH IN TIME! KEEP DIGGING!

ALL NIGHT THE TWO MEN WORKED! FINALLY, TOWARD MORNING, THEY STRUCK THE *GIANT COFFIN*...

A *COFFIN*? WE'VE REACHED A COFFIN?

WE'LL DON'T JUST *KNEEL* THERE, *STARTING*? *CHOP IT OPEN!*



N-N-NOT YOU... DO IT, IRWIN!

ONE SIDE, YOU SHIVELING COWARD!



IRWIN SCRAWLED FAST ELLIOT AND JARRED THE SPADE SAVAGELY INTO THE BLACK WORM-EATEN BOX BEFORE HIM! THE SIDE GAVE WAY WITH A GIGGERING CLUNCH AND A FOUL SMELL BURNED THEIR NOSTRILS...

FREW! WHAT AN *ODOR*?

WHAT DID YOU *EXPECT*? PE-FUMES? LOOK AT THE *HOLE* I SMASHED! THE WOOD IS SO OLD AND ROTTER! IT GIVES LIKE *PAPER*!



IRWIN SCOOPED THE CONTENTS OF THE COFFIN OUT ONTO THE TUNNEL FLOOR! BLEACHED BONES, COVERED WITH TATTERED REMAINS OF CLOTHING, SPILLED OUT! A GRIMMING WHITE SKULL ROLLED FORWARD, STARING AT THEM WITH HOLLOW BLACK EYES...

UGH! IRWIN? I... I'M *FEIGHTENED*!

STOP ACTING LIKE A CHILD, ELLIOT!



CRAWL BACK TO THE CELLAR AND BRING A *SACK*? WE'VE GOT A LOT *MORE* COFFINS TO LOCATE TO FILL THAT *ORDER*!

Y... YES, IRWIN? I'M... *GOING*!





HEH, HEH! I'LL BETTER KIDDEE? RUSHING OUT OF BUSINESS? NO, *NOTHING* HAPPENED TO IRWIN AND ELLIOT! IN FACT, AFTER THAT, BUSINESS WAS *PRETTY GOOD!* BILLS WERE PAID! MORE ORDERS POUNED IN! THEY BECAME QUITE WEALTHY! THAT FALL...



WELL, IRWIN! THE SEASON'S ALMOST OVER! I THINK YOU AND I DESERVE A VACATION!



GOOD IDEA, ELLIOT!

WHAT SAY WE DRIVE UPSTATE TO SOME HOTEL AND TAKE A GOOD REST?

SOUNDS GREAT! WHEN DO WE LEAVE?



THE NEXT DAY, IRWIN AND ELLIOT CLOSED THEIR FERTILIZER FACTORY AND STARTED OUT ON THEIR VACATION! THEY DROVE ALL DAY... BUT TOWARDS EVENING...

WE'D BETTER FIND A PLACE TO SPEND THE NIGHT, ELLIOT! IT'S GETTING DARK!



YEAH! KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN AND OH... *WHAT THE..?*

THE ENGINE SPUTTERED AND STALLED! THE CAR COASTED TO A STOP! DARKNESS WAS CLOSING IN...

BLAST IT! WE'RE OUT OF GAS!

LOOK! WE'VE STOPPED BESIDE A CORN FIELD! THERE MUST BE A FARM HOUSE AROUND!



THE TWO MEN GOT OUT OF THEIR CAR AND STARTED ACROSS THE CORN FIELD BETWEEN THE TOWERING ROWS OF STILL-UNHARVESTED CORN...

GOLLY, THIS CORN SHOWS TALL! IT'S WAY OVER OUR HEADS!



HURRY! IT'S GETTING DARK! THIS WAY, CORN THIS FUNKY!

IRWIN AND ELLIOT MOVED THROUGH THE ROWS OF GREEN STALKS... PEERING AHEAD OF THEM... SEARCHING FOR A LIGHT... A SIGN OF A FARM HOUSE...

EENE, ISN'T IT, ELLIOT?

I... I'M AFRAID, IRWIN!



HEH, HEH! THEY SHOULD BE, EH, KIDDER? IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT THE FARMER WHOSE CORN FIELD IRWIN AND ELLIOT ARE CROSSING IS THE ONE WHO BOUGHT THE THOUSAND POUNDS OF BONE-MEAL FERTILIZER MADE FROM THE BONES IN THE CEMETERY! IN FACT, THE BONE-MEAL WAS USED TO FERTILIZE THIS CORN! RIGHT NOW, THE GREEN STALKS ARE THRASHING WITH PHOSPHATES SUCKED UP THROUGH THEIR ROOTS... PHOSPHATES FROM BONES... HUMAN BONES!



SUDDENLY, IRWIN CRIED OUT...

ELLIOT!
SOME THING'S
GOT MY FOOT!
HELP ME!
I'M GUAHNT!

IT'S PROBABLY
JUST A ROOT!
COME ON!



THEN, IRWIN SCREAMED IN PAIN! ELLIOT SPUR AROUND, SCOUTING INTO THE GATHERING DARKNESS...

YAAAAAHH!

IRWIN!
WHAT'S
WRONG?



ELLIOT STARED AT HIS STRUGGLING PARTNER! STRINGY ROOTS TWIRLED ABOUT HIS ANKLES! THE GREEN STALKS AROUND HIM WENT FORWARD, THRASHING, WHIPPING...

GOOD LORD!



ELLIOT TURNED AND BEGAN TO RUN! HE SCRAMBLED DOWN THE FURROWS BETWEEN ROWS OF TOWERING CORN! SLAPPING VINE-LIKE SHOOTS REACHED OUT AT HIM... SLAPPING AT HIS FACE, WHIPPING AROUND HIS ANKLES! BEHIND HIM, IRWIN'S SCREAMS WERE HYSTERICAL NOW...

THE CORN! IT'S TRYING TO
KILL US! IT'S GOT IRWIN!
I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY!



IN THE MORNING, THE FARMER AND HIS Hired HANDS THAT HAD COME TO HELP WITH THE HARVESTING OF THE CORN FOUND THE TWO FORTLIZED MEN! ELLIOT HUNG, IMPALES, UPON THE BARBED-WIRE FENCE! IRWIN LAY SOME THIRTY FEET BEHIND...

DON'T UNDERSTAND IT! THEY'VE
BEEN BEATEN TO A PULP...
EACH OF THEM!

LOOK AT THE
CORN-COBS!
THEIR HUSKS
HAVE BEEN
RIPPED AWAY...

AND
THEY'RE
COVERED
WITH BLOOD!



HEH, HEH! THAT'S THE STORY, KIDDER! YOU CAN ALWAYS DEPEND ON YOUR DRY-T-KEEPER FOR A SURPRISE, EH? WELL, I HOPE YOU ENDED THIS LITTLE HORROR FARM! IRWIN AND ELLIOT'S BATTERED BODIES HAVE BEEN LAID TO REST NOW... IN A PICTUREQUE LITTLE CEMETERY! ONLY ONE THING MARS THE BEAUTY OF THE SPOT! THERE'S A FACTORY RIGHT NEXT BY! IT! WHAT'S THE SIGN SAY? EH... FRANKFURTERS! F HMMM! ROT.

NOW! DON'T FORGET TO SEND THE OLD WITCH'S MIND TO - AND OUT HOW TO OBTAIN AN ACTUAL PHOTO OF ME! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN

MY MAG, PAGE!
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Reprint of First Issues 2000041-501-1. 1st-12: August 1985. Published quarterly independent February, May and August by Gemstone Publishing, 200 4th Ave. West Plains, MO 65775-2624. Second-class postage paid at West Plains, MO. Extra contents 1-1985 by William M. Gaines, Agent. 1st-1985 of First #1-12: 1982 by Nelson Publishing Co. 301-1-12: 1985 by William M. Gaines, Agent. 1st-12 All rights reserved. Nothing herein constitutes an endorsement without the written permission of William M. Gaines. New York, New York, Annual subscription rate \$5 (\$13 outside US) payable in US funds. Printed in Canada. Postmaster: send address changes to Reprint of First, Gemstone, PO Box 469, West Plains, MO 65775-2624.

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEL, HEL! STUBBORN, WHY KEEP COMIN' BACK FOR MORE, WHY WELL, THERE'S PLENTY MORE... SO KEEP COMIN'! BESIDES, MY IDIOT EDITORS JUST GAVE ME A BOOST IN SALARY! IT'S A BOOST OF A RIVAL PUBLISHER! I GET THE BEST OF HIS CORPSE NEXT ISSUE! HEL, HEL! YEP, IT'S ME, AGAIN! THE OLD WITCH, MISTRESS OF THE HAUNT OF FEAR... SHIVER-CHOP, CREEP-COOPER, AND ALL THAT SORT OF BOY! C'WON MY MY CAULDRON'S BOILED OFF TO A CRIS, WAITING FOR YOU! LOOKS LIKE BARBAGE! HEY! THERE'S A TART! AND IT'LL JUST TELL IT TO YOU! IT'S ABOUT A BARBAGE COLLECTOR! SAY, DID YOU GET ANY ST. VALENTINE'S DAY CARD? WELL, THIS BARBAGE COLLECTOR DID! READOFF I CALL THIS HORROR-HELPING...

POETIC JUSTICE!



OLD ARNER ELLIOT STOOD ON THE PORCH OF HIS HANDSHAKE HOUSE GUNNING DOWN AT THE OVERTHROWING, SINGLING GROUP OF CHILDREN BEFORE HIM! HIS WRINKLED EYES WERE GLAZED AND NET AS HE STUDIED THEIR BEAMING FACES...



BOLLY, MR. ELLIOT! THEY'RE JUST LIKE ME! THEY'RE SWELL! YOU FIXED 'EM UP FINE! BEST THANKS FOR THE TOPS, MR. ELLIOT!

OLD ASHER ELLIOT WAS A CAR-
CASS MAN! FOR THIRTY-EX
YEARS, HE'D BEEN COLLECTING
THE REFUSE OF THE TOWN! HE'S
NEVER MADE MUCH MONEY AT IT,
BUT HE'S BEEN A HAPPY MAN!
THAT IS, UNTIL ABOUT TWO
YEARS AGO... WHEN ASHER'S
WIFE HAD DIED...



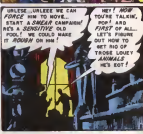
SINCE HIS WIFE'S DEATH, ASHER
HAD BEEN LONELY... **VERY**
LONELY! SO HE'S STARTED
EALZING THE BROKEN TOYS
HE'S FOUND IN THE REFUSE
CANE! HE'D WORKED THROUGH-
OUT THE YEAR REPAIRING THEM
SO THAT HE COULD GIVE THEM
TO THE POOR CHILDREN AT
CHRISTMAS TIME...



DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET FROM ASHER
ELLIOT'S RUN-DOWN HOUSE, HENRY BURNBURY,
THE TOWN'S RICHEST MAN, HAD BUILT A LUXU-
ROUS MODERN HOME FOR HIMSELF AND HIS ONLY
HEIR... HIS REBELLED SON, RAPFOLD...



HENRY BURNBURY HAD OFFERED ASHER A HAND-
SOME PRICE FOR HIS DERELICTED OLD HOME,
BUT ASHER HAD REFUSED TO TELL...



IN ASHER'S LONELINESS, HE'D BEGIN TO PICK UP ANY POOR STRAY DOG OR CAT THAT HE'D FOUND SEARCHING FOR FOOD IN THE REFUSE BARS! HE'D TAKEN THEM INTO HIS HOME, FED AND CARED FOR THEM, AND KEPT THEM AS COMPART TO FILL HIS LONELY HOURS...

HE MUST HAVE SEVEN OR EIGHT DOGS...AND TEN OR ELEVEN CATS!

Y'KNOW HOW HE FEEDS 'EM? SADI HE COLLECTS SCRAPES FROM HIS SARGASSA TRUCK! HE COULDN'T AFFORD TO FEED ONE OF THOSE STRAYS IF HE HAD TO BUY THE FOOD!

WELL, THE FIRST THING I'M GOING TO DO IS MAKE HIM GET RID OF THOSE PETS OF HIS!

AND I'LL START A GOSSIP CAMPAIGN! BOY, WE'LL HUR HIM OUT OF TOWN... FAST!

MEANWHILE, ASHER, UNCONSCIOUS TO THE UNRAIDIOUS CAMPAIGN THE BURGERS WERE STARTING, CONTINUED MAKING HIS ROUNDS.

HEY! HERE COMES MR. ELLIST!

HELLO, MR. ELLIST!

HI, RIGGS!

KIND HEAVEN! ASHER NEVER FAILED TO FILL HIS POCKETS WITH CANDY BOUGHT WITH HIS HARD-EARNED MONEY! HE'D PASS IT OUT TO THE CHILDREN AS THEY CROWDED AROUND HIS ANCIENT SARGASSA TRUCK...

ANY CANDY HERE YOU THANKS, TODAY MR. ELLIST?



TO THE FOLKS OF THE TOWN, ASHER AND HIS BATTLETRAP WERE A FRIENDLY AND FAMILIAR SIGHT! EVERYBODY LOVED OLD ASHER, ESPECIALLY...

MORRIS, ASHER! HOW'S BUSINESS TODAY? SWEETLY, HEART? HAW, HAW!

HEH, HEH! THAT'S RIGHT, MR. GARDNER!



BUT THE WHEELS OF HATE WERE BEGINNING TO TURN... SORRY, MR. BURGESS! THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT! MAYBE IF THE FOLKS AROUND TOWN WANTED A LICENSE-LAW PASSED...

DOG AND CAT LICENSES, EH? SAY, THAT'D DO IT! HE COULDN'T AFFORD TO BUY THOSE!



AND SO, ON COLD JANUARY NIGHTS...

HOW'S THAT, DAD?

DID 'EM UP MORE! OLD MAN ASHER WILL BE STEAMING! THOSE ARE HIS PRIZE MORE BURNER!



THE DISASTER IN THE VARIOUS
GARDENS AROUND TOWN WERE
BLAMED ON...

ARNER ELLIOT'S
MUTTS, OR BAGER!
THEY WUNTA DOGS
IT'VE GUNTA MAKE
HIM GET RID OF 'EM!

AT PRIDE
ROBIE!
BUNNED!
YOU'RE
RIGHT,
HAROLD!



LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE TOWN-
FOLK WHOSE GARDENS HAD BEEN
DESTROYED WERE ANNOYED...

HIS GOT TO GET
RID OF THOSE
STRAY MONSIELS!
A LICENSE LAW'S
THE ONLY WAY!

THEY LET'S
MAKE THE
TOWN BOARD
PASS ONE!



AND SO...

YES,
OFFICER!

IT'S ABOUT YOUR
DOGS AND CATS,
MR. ELLIOT! YOU'LL
HAVE TO BUY LICENSES
FOR 'EM, OR THEY GO
TO THE POUND! IT'S
A NEW LAW!



LICENSES? HOW...
HOW MUCH ARE
THEY?

TWO-FIFTY APiece, MR.
ELLIOT! THAT ADDS UP TO
AN AWFUL LOT FOR FOUR
MENAGERIES!



IT WAS A SAD DAY FOR ARNER ELLIOT WHEN THEY
CAME AND TOOK HIS PETS AWAY! CLEVER CATS AND
TEN DOGS WOULD HAVE COST THE POOR OLD MAN
MORE THAN FIFTY DOLLARS! HE JUST DIDN'T HAVE
THE MONEY.

THERE THEY GO! POOF! HEH,
HEH! HE'S ONLY KEPT ONE!

WHEN I'M THROUGH,
SON, HE WON'T EVEN
BE ABLE TO AFFORD
THAT ONE!



HERRY BURBUNOT WENT TO SEE AN ACQUAINTANCE
IN A NEIGHBORING TOWN

DO YOU WANT ME TO START
A BARBAGE COLLECTING
SERVICE IN COMPETITION
WITH ARNER ELLIOT, EH,
HERRATS?

THAT'S RIGHT, FRED!
I WANT TO PUT HIM
OUT OF BUSINESS!
YOU OUT HIS PRICE
IN HALF!



I CAN'T DO IT, HERRATS!
I'D LOSE MONEY!

DON'T WORRY, FRED! I'LL
MAKE UP FOR WHAT YOU
LOSE, AND YOU'LL BE SURE
TO SHOW A MAJOR
PROFIT BESIDES! I'LL
PAY YOU OUT OF MY OWN
POCKET! BUT KEEP THIS
QUIET, EH?



MEANWHILE...

THAT'S WHAT I SAID!
HE'S NOTHING BUT A
FILTHY OLD MAN.
MRS. BUTTERLY! DO
YOU REALIZE HE'S
BROUGHT RATS INTO
THIS NEIGHBORHOOD?

OH,
DEAR!

LORD KNOWS WHAT YOUR
CHILDREN LEARN FROM
HIM. MRS. FIELDS? HE'S
SO DIRTY! AFTER ALL...
A KARBAGE MAN!

HOW
DIRTY!

A MAN LIKE HIM SHOULD
BE FORCED TO MOVE
OUT OF THIS NEIGHBOR-
HOOD. MRS. JAMES! IT
ISN'T RESPECTABLE!

YOU'RE
SO
RIGHT!

AND WHEN ONE OF THE CHILDREN BECAME SER-
IOUSLY ILL, THE BURGBOYS JUMPED AT THE CHANCE.

IT'S PROBABLY THAT ZARDY
ASHER ELLIOT OWES THE
KIDS! FULL OF DYSSEN-
TERY...CONTAMINATED...

HE OUGHT TO
BE RUN OUT...
THAT'S WHAT!

THEN FRED AMSTERDAM MOVED IN...BACKED BY OLD
MAN BURGBOY...

HALF THE
PRICE, YOU
SAID!

CORRECT! HALF!
WHAT YOU'RE PAY-
ING NOW...AND BETTER
SERVICES!

WHERE DO
I SIGN?

THE WHEELS OF HATE WERE SPINNING FASTER NOW.

YOU HEARD ME? IF I CAUGH YOU,
OR HEAR THAT YOU WENT TO THAT
DIRTY OLD MAN'S HOUSE, I'LL
WHIP THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF
YOU! UNDERSTAND?

YES,
MAM!

AND SO, HIS PETE GONE, THE CHILDREN NO LONGER
COMING TO SEE HIM... HIS BUSINESS WIPED OUT...
PEOPLE REFUSING TO TALK TO HIM, ASHER ELLIOT
WITHDREW INTO THE LONELINESS OF HIS DREAMY,
RUN-DOWN HOME...

SON...SON? CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, BOY?
USED TO BE FOLKS MORE FRIENDLY!
NOW...NOW I'M ALL ALONE...
"DEPT FOR YOU, BOY!"

BUT AS FEBRUARY ROLLED AROUND, THE BURNBOYS PREPARED TO POUR SALT INTO ASHER ELLIOT'S SLEEPING WOUNDS...



LISTER, SON! GET THIS! I BOUGHT THIS VALENTINE FOR OLD MAN ELLIOT! 'HOIST ARE CHILDREN... LOVE IS A BELL! PURSUIT IS PERFUME... BUT YOU JUST SMELL... FROM BARBERS' HUB, HUB! I ADDED THAT LAST CRACK!

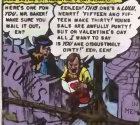
HEY, THAT'S TERRIFIC. GAD! I SORTA GET ME ONE!

I HAVE AN IDEA, SON! I KNOW WHERE I CAN BUY A WHOLE LOAD OF THESE MARVELOUS VAL ENTINES! IF WE COULD GET EVERYONE IN TOWN TO SEND OLD MAN ELLIOT ONE...

...WE'D MOVE OUT, SONNY! WE COULD BUY HIS PROPERTY CHEAP! LET'S GET TA AND PASS 'EM OUT!



AND SO, AS ST. VALENTINE'S DAY NEARED...



HERE'S ONE FOR YOU, MR. BAKER! MAKE SURE YOU MAIL IT OUT, ENT?

SENSE! THIS ONE'S A GOOD, HEARTY! FIFTEEN AND FIFTEEN MAKE THIRTY! THIRTY SALS ARE ANFULLY FORTY! BUT ON VALENTINE'S DAY ALL I WANT TO SAY IS FOR AND DISGUSTINGLY ONTY! EEN, ENT?

MR. BURNBOY AND HIS SPOILED SON HAROLD PASSED OUT THE HEART-BREAKING CARDS TO THE WHOLE TOWN.



LISTEN TO THE CARD I GOT FOR OLD MAN ELLIOT, MARTHA! 'A TREE IS BEAUTIFUL, IF ITS OWNER PRUNES IT! BUT OUR TOWN ISN'T, 'CAUSE YOUR HOUSE RUNS IT!' HAHAHA! ISN'T THAT SOMETHIN'!

ON ST. VALENTINE'S EVE, STAMPS WERE LIGNED AND ENVELOPES SEALED...



HIC, NICE NIGHT!

YEAH, TO MAIL ST. VALENTINE'S DAY CARDS! HEH, HEH!

AND EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, LOOK AT THIS SON! A WHOLE STACK O' MAIL! HOW COME? WHAT'S TODAY?



OH, THAT'S IT! FEBRUARY FOURTEENTH! BE VALENTINE'S DAY! WELL, I'LL BE BURNED! THOSE LIL' TYRES DIDN'T FORGET ME AFTER ALL!



THEN, ONE BY ONE, OLD ASHER ELLIOT OPENED AND READ THE VICIOUS, SHAMEFUL, CARDS...

"S-S-SOME PEOPLE LIVE IN THE COUNTRY!
S-S-SOME...PEOPLE...S-S-SOME...LIVE IN TOWN!
WHY...DON'T YOU...DO US A...S-S-SOME...FAVOR!
J-JUMP IN THE...S-S-SOME...AND...S-S-SOME...S-S-SOME..."



FOR WEEKS AFTER ST. VALENTINE'S DAY, NO ONE SAW HIM NOR HAIR OF ASHER ELLIOT...

"MAYBE HE LEFT
TOWN. POPPY WENT
AWAY...?"

"THEN I'LL BUY UP
HIS HOUSE FOR BACH
TAKES 'HEM!
HEH!"



SO THEY BROKE INTO ASHER ELLIOT'S HOUSE? ONLY IT SURPRISED THEM! IT WASN'T INFESTED WITH RATS...AND IT WASN'T FILTHY AND DIRTY...

"WHY IT'S...IT'S ALL
HEAT AND ORDERLY!"

"BACH AND BACH...
'CEPT FOR SOME DUST
ON THE POLISHED
TABLES!"



"SOME...FOLKS...ARE BORN TO MAKE MONEY...
OTHERS...TO ELL...AND TO...S-S-SOME!
I WAS...S-S-SOME FOR ONE PURPOSE...
TO CALL YOU...A...DIRTY OLD...SLIDE...
SHFF... SHFF..."



FINALLY, AFTER TWO MONTHS HAD PASSED, CURIOSITY GOT THE BETTER OF THE TOWNSFOLK? THEY MILLED AROUND ASHER ELLIOT'S RUN-DOWN HOME...

"LET'S BUST DOWN THE DOOR!
LET'S SEE WHAT IT LOOKS
LIKE INSIDE!"

"YEAH...THE
FILTHY
NOVEL!"



YES, ASHER ELLIOT'S HOUSE SURPRISED THE TOWNSPEOPLE...REALLY SURPRISED THEM! EVERYTHING WAS IN ITS PLACE EVERYTHING WAS CLEAN...SPOTLESS! ONLY ONE THING MARRIED THE ORDERLINESS...ONLY ONE THING WAS OUT OF PLACE...ASHER'S TWO-MONTH-OLD CORPSE...HANGING IN THE PARLOR.

"HE...HE'S DEAD!"

"FILLED
HIMSELF!"



NOW, NOW, KIDNEY! DON'T
PEEA AT THE ENDING! RELAX
AND ENJOY IT! DON'T WORRY!
I'M AS MAD AS HENRY BUR-
BURY AND HIS SON AS YOU
ARE! WE WON'T LET HIM GET
AWAY WITH THIS. ON RATHER
ABNER MORT! BUT IT TOOK
HIM ALMOST A YEAR! LET'S
SEE! IT WAS A YEAR. A
WHOLE YEAR AFTER ABNER
KILLED HIMSELF!



THEY BURIED HIM IN POTTER'S
FIELD, JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN!
ON THE EVE OF FEBRUARY
FOURTEENTH, JUST AS THE
TOWN STEEPLE-BELL TOLLED
MIDNIGHT. ON THE FIRST ANN-
IVERSARY OF ABNER'S SUICIDE.
A STRANGE THING HAPPENED!
THE SOIL ON ABNER'S GRAVE
CRACKED OPEN! A PETIT ROT-
TING HAND REACHED UP...



IT THEN FOLLOWED! THE THING
POUNCHED UP INTO THE SPRAY
WINTER AIR! IT GOT TO ITS
FEET, SWAYING UNCERTAINLY...



THEN IT STUMBLED OFF TOWARD TOWN! CRAWLING
CLOUDS OF GRAVE MUD FELL AROUND AS IT TOTTERED
ALONE! BITS OF MUDDY, MOLDY, POUL-DRILLING
FLESH DROPPED IN ITS PATH! IT SEEMED TO
KNOW... TO *SENSE* WHERE IT WAS GOING.



HAROLD BURBURY WAS ADDRESSING ST. VALENTINE'S
DAY CARDS, WHEN THE THING CAME IN.
THEY WERE LEFT-OVERS FROM THE PREVIOUS
YEAR. HAROLD SPUN AROUND AS THE BEARING
STENCH SURROUNDED HIS NOSE.



IN THE MORNING, OLD HENRY BURBURY LOOKED FOR HAROLD,
AND COULDN'T FIND HIM! BUT IN HIS ROOM, HE FOUND A NEATLY-
TIED PACKAGE! THE CARD SAID... A VALENTINE'S DAY GREETING
TO HENRY! HE OPENED IT...



YEP, KIDNEY, HAROLD'S HEART
WAS IN THE NEAT LITTLE PACKAGE.
ALL BLOOD AND STICKY!
WELL, DON'T LOOK SO SHOCKED!
THAT'S WHAT YOU SEND ON
ST. VALENTINE'S DAY, ISN'T
IT? HEARTS? WHA...? NOT
REAL BEEP BULP! OH I'VE
SEEN DOH IT FOR YEARS! NO
WONDER I'M NOT POPULAR!

FOR... IF YOU CAN STILL HOLD
THE CRUMMY MAM,
TURN TO THE
KAMU-KEEPER!
HE'S GOT HIS
OWN YARN TO
TATTOO! BYE!
SEE YOU LATER!



THE END.

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! YEP! IT'S THE PAUL-KEEPER AGAIN... YOUR HOST IS HORRIBLE! ALL READY TO HAVE YOUR WIFE BEARED OUT OF YOU? OH! ONLY HALF-READY, BUT WELL, COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR AND SIT YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT CORPSE OVER THERE! OH...UH! BE CAREFUL! DON'T SIT ON HIS CHEST! THE FATTED HENT DRY YET? OH, I'M PRACTISING TO BE A TATTOO ARTIST! CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL! THEY SAID IT WAS A STIFF COURSE! GUESS I WAS INSPIRED BY THE TALE. I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU! I CALL IT...

...ON A DEAD MAN'S CHEST!



STEVEN ANDERSON, THE WEALTHY STEAMSHIP LINE OWNER, LEARNED OUT THE DOORWAY OF HIS EXPENSIVELY TILED BATHROOM AND CALLED TO HIS YOUNG AND ATTRACTIVE WIFE...

HELLO! THE PHONE'S RINGING! ANSWER IT, HUNT! I'M SHAVING!

I CAN'T STEVE! HE'S A COLL AND ANSWER IT YOURSELF! I'M DRESSING!



MM ANDERSON WIPED THE SHAM-
ING CREAM FROM HIS FACE AND
TURNED THROUGH HIS SPACIOUS
PENTHOUSE APARTMENT TO THE
JAWLINE PHONE! THE MANY
TATTOOS HE'D OBTAINED YEARS
BEFORE BLAMED ON HIS NOW
SABBING MUSCLES...

STEVE ANDERSON...ONE-TIME
SEAMAN WHO'D WORKED HIM-
SELF UP TO SHIP'S CAPTAIN,
THEN SHIP OWNER, THEN
OWNER OF A FLEET OF CARGO
BOATS...SHOUTED WITH BLUE
INTO THE SLACK PHONE HE
HELD IN HIS MUNE FAT...

SURPRISE ME?
YOU COULD ENCKE
ME OVER WITH A
FEATHER! CRACK
OVER! YOU MUST
MEET HELEN, MY
WIFE! HOW LONG
HAS IT BEEN?
LORD! FOUR
YEARS, NOW!
DEARY GOOD!
WE'LL SEE YOU
IN AN HOUR,
THEN!

STEVE!
HE'S
HAVE
AN
APPON-
MENT
WITH
THE
KANDER-
HORNS!



H...HELLO?
STEVE? I
JUST GOT BACK
TO THE STATES!
THIS IS LARRY!



LARRY! YOU
SON-OF-A-BUN!
WHY DON'T YOU
LET A GUY KNOW
WHEN HIS ~~ED~~
BROTHER'S
COMING HOME?

I
THOUGHT
IT'S
SURPRISE
YOU,
STEVE!



MM ANDERSON HUNG UP AND TURNED TO HIS
WIFE! A BRAGG ARRM COVERED HIS ONCE SMARTEN
FACE...

CANCEL IT, HELEN! THAT
WAS MY ~~ED~~ BROTHER
LARRY! HE JUST GOT
IN! I WANT YOU TO
MEET HIM! YOU'LL
LOVE HIM! SEE!
FOUR YEARS! I
WONDER IF HE'S
CHANGED
MUCH!

BUT, STEVE!
THE KANDERHORNS
ARE VERY
IMPORTANT
PEOPLE!
COULDN'T YOUR
BROTHER
WAIT TILL
WE GOT
HOME?



NONSENSE! NO
ONE'S AS IMPORTANT
TO ME AS LARRY!
SEE THIS TATTOO
HERE? I GOT THIS
IN SAMATHA THE
DAY LARRY...

I KNOW! I
KNOW! YOU'VE
TOLD ME ALL
ABOUT THOSE
UGLY THINGS...
A HUNDRED
TIMES! WHAT
CAN I TELL THE
KANDERHORNS?



AW, BABY! DON'T BE
ANGRY! WHAT'LL YOU
MEET LARRY! YOU'LL
SEE! YOU'LL BE CRAZY
ABOUT HIM! I FEEL
LIKE A FATHER TO
THAT KID! I PUT HIM
THROUGH SCHOOL...

DON'T YOU
THINK YOU OUGHT
TO FINISH
SHAVING AND
GET DRESSED,
STEVE?



WINE OH! TEAR!
DRA! YOU CALL
THE KANDERHORNS
AND MAKE OUR
APPOINCE, ER,
HELEN?

ALL RIGHT, STEVE!
DRA! IT! SIVING
UP A SOCIAL EVENING
WITH THEM TO
WELCOME HIS
BROTHER
BROTHER...



HEH, HEH! WELL KNOWN, I SUPPOSE YOU'VE WONDERING WHAT A **RAVISHING BEAUTY** LIKE **HELEN SAW** IS A **YIP OLD BOB** LIKE **STEVE**, EN? IT'S SIMPLE! THE **MARRIED HIM** FOR HIS **BOOBY**! SHE'D **NEVER BEEN SORRY** EITHER, EXCEPT WHEN THE **OLD TAR** STARTED **SPOUTIN' OFF** ABOUT **WHERE** AND **WHEN** HE **GOT EACH** OF HIS **TATTOOS**? SHE'D **NEVER BEEN SORRY** THAT IS... UNTIL **THAT NIGHT**? AH! BUT I'M **SETTLIN** AHEAD OF MY **STORY**...



LATER, THE FRONT DOOR CHIMES ANNOUNCED **LARRY'S** ARRIVAL! **HELEN** WENT TO LET HIM IN! AS SHE OPENED THE DOOR...



SASP...

HI! WHO ARE YOU? I'M **LARRY ANDERSON**! I'M **STEVE**... OR HIS **WIFE**... HERE?

I... I'M **HELEN**! I'M **STEVE'S** **WIFE**!

Y... YOU? OH? I... I'M **SORRY**? I THAT IS... I **NEVER EXPECTED** SUCH A **YOUNG** AND **BEAUTIFUL**... **MOMMY**!



WHY... THANK YOU FOR THE **SWEET COMPLIMENTS**, **LARRY**? COME IN! **STEVE'S** **DRESSING**!

MY **BROTHER SURPRISED** ME, **HELEN**! I **JUST** SAY I **ADMIRE** HIS **TASTE**? **FRANKLY**... I **NEVER** THOUGHT HE **HAD** IT **IN** HIM...

LARRY!



STEVE BURST INTO THE ROOM... HIS **BOOMING VOICE** ECHOING THROUGH THE **PENTHOUSE APARTMENT**...

LARRY! YOU LOOK **SWELL**! **REALLY GREAT**? MAN... LOOK AT THE **SHOULDER** ON HIM, **HELEN**! **FOUR YEARS** AT SEA CERTAINLY **BUILT YOU** INTO A **HE-MAN**, **LARRY**? **HEY!** ANY **TATTOO**?

WOULD NOT A **ONE**, **STEVE**?



NO TATTOO? WHAT KIND OF A **SAILOR** ARE YOU? WHY WHEN I **WAS** YOUR **AGE**, I **HAD FOUR** ALREADY! **ONE** FOR **EVERY** **THIN**...

WOULD YOU **LIKE** A **ONE**, **LARRY**?

OHAY, **HELEN**? SAY! **OH! YOU** EVER PUT **ONE** ON YOUR **CHEST**, **STEVE**? I **REMEMBER** YOU **WERE** **SAYING** **THAT** **SPOT**!



THAT'S **RIGHT**! AH! I'M **STILL** **SAYING** IT! A **REALLY SPECIAL** **TATTOO**'S **BORN** SO **FAR**? **SOMETHING**... **REALLY**... **EXCEPTIONAL**! I **DON'T** **KNOW** **WHAT** **BUT** **TODAY**... **BEFORE** I **ONE**... I'LL **HAVE** IT **DONE**!

TELL US **ABOUT** YOUR **ADVENTURES** AT **SEA**, **LARRY**! I'D **LOVE** TO **HEAR** THEM!

AH, THEY'D **BE** **OLD** **RAT** TO **STEVE**? **NOW** **ABOUT** **BOON** **OUT** **AND** **DOWN** **THE** **TOWN**?





SO STEVE TOOK HELEN AND LARRY OUT ON THE TOWN! HE WAS *REALLY* HAPPY. STEVE WAS! PROUD OF HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, AND PROUD OF HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE! HE WAS CONTENT TO SIT AT A NIGHT-CLUB TABLE AND WATCH THEM DANCE TOGETHER... AND DRINK... AND WATCH... AND... DRINK... AND... WASH... AND... WASH...



STEVE'S DRINKING A LOT, LARRY! I THINK WE'D BETTER TAKE HIM HOME!

AFTER THE DANCE, HELEN! BUT WHY ARE YOU WORRYING ABOUT HIM. ANYWAY? YOU DON'T LOVE HIM!



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? OF COURSE I...

DON'T KID ME, HELEN! I SEE THE CONTEMPT YOU HAVE FOR HIM! I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES! YOU MARRIED HIM FOR HIS MONEY! DON'T YOU?



NOW DARE YOU...

I WASN'T BORN YESTERDAY, HELEN! YOU'RE A *WONDERFUL* KID! YOU COULD HAVE HOOKED SOME HANDSOME BRUTE EASILY! AND STEVE'S SO *PRIDE* PRIDE! I KNOW HIM! I'M SURPRISED YOU'VE TOLERATED HIM AS LONG AS YOU HAVE! HE MUST DOMINATE YOU THE WAY HE'S ALWAYS DOMINATED ME! I... HATE HIM, MYSELF!



HELEN BROKE AWAY FROM LARRY AND ELBOWED HER WAY ACROSS THE DANCE FLOOR TO THE TABLE WHERE STEVE SAT DRINKING IDIOTICALLY AT AN EMPTY HIGHBALL GLASS...

COME ON, STEVE! WE'RE GOING HOME!

WASNA MATTER? I'M EARLY! DONCHA LIKE THIN FLASHES? LESS GO TO *ANOTHER* FLASHES! THE SHOW HERE STINKS, ANYHOW...



HELEN HELPED STEVE TO HIS FEET AND GUIDED HIM OUT OF THE SMOKE-FILLED CLUB! LARRY CAUGHT UP WITH THEM OUTSIDE! HE TOOK STEVE'S OTHER ARM! HELEN BLARED AT LARRY ANGRILY! HE SMILED BACK AT HER...

I'M *SHO* HAPPY! MY *BEAUTIFUL* WIFE... AN' I *KNOW* *BRUDDER*! *SHO* HAPPY!

WHERE WE GOIN' NOW? HUH? LESS GO DOWNA BLOCK T' *ANOTHER* FLASHES! I KNOW... DOWNA...

NO, STEVE! YOU'RE SORE HOME!



THEY STAMMERED ALONG THE DARK STREET... THE THREE OF THEM! SUDDENLY, STEVEN ANDERSON STIFFENED! HIS FACE LIT UP...

WHAT IS IT, STEVEN? WHAT DO YOU SEE?

LOOKA THAT! A TATTOO SHOP! I NEVER SAW THAT FLASHES BEFORE! THASH IT! THASH IT!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, STEVE?

STEVE STUMBLED ACROSS THE DESERTED STREET TO THE DARK LITTLE SHOP WITH THE FIERY LIGHT GLIMMERING IN THE WINDOW.

NOW I KNOW WHAT TATTOO I WANT FOR THAT SPEEDY SPOT ON MY CHEEK!

STEVEN? COME BACK!

THE DOOR TO THE SHOP SQUEEZED OPEN AND A BELL TINKLED IN THE BACK! A SMALL, QUEER MAN SMILED AT STEVEN! LARRY AND HELEN CAME IN BEHIND HIM...

YES, SIR? STEVEN? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

I WANNA TATTOO! PLEASE!

TATTOO! SOMETHIN' SPEEDY!

STEVE EXPLAINED WHAT HE WANTED TO THE BEING LITTLE MAN...

I WANT MY WIFE ON ONE SHIDE... ME INNA MIDDLE... AND MY KID BRUDDER ONNA OTHER SHIDE... RIGHT HERE! ARM IN ARM... ALL OF US!

AS YOU WISH, SIR!



IT TOOK THE STRANGE TATTOO MAN TWO HOURS TO COMPLETE HIS WORK OF ART! WHEN HE WAS FINISHED, THREE HAPPY FIGURES ADORDED STEVEN'S CHEST...

THERE YOU ARE, SIR!

PERFECT! JUST WHAT I WANTED! WHADAYA THINK, HELEN, LARRY?

VERY NICE! NOW LET'S GO HOME!



STEVE WAS OUT ON HIS FEET WHEN HELEN AND LARRY GOT HIM TO THE APARTMENT! THEY PUT HIM TO SLEEP! THEN...

YOU MIGHT AS WELL STAY HERE FOR THE NIGHT, LARRY!

I HOPE YOU'VE NOT SORE AT ME FOR WHAT I SAID WHILE WE WERE DANCING, HELEN!



HELEN MOVED CLOSE TO LARRY, LOOKING UP AT HIM...

I'M NOT SORE, LARRY! EVERYTHING YOU SAID IS TRUE! I DIDN'T MIND BEING MARRIED TO HIM SO MUCH... UNTIL FOW CAME...

C'MERE... BABY!





HELEN'S HORRIFIED SHRIEK ECHOED THROUGH THE HOUSE! LARRY FINISHED SHOVING THE POLICE THE INFORMATION... THAT STEVE HAD SLIPPED AND FALLEN WHILE TAKING A BATH! THEN HE RAN UP AND RUSHED TO THE BATHROOM.



WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU SCREAMING ABOUT? THE COPS ARE ON THEIR WAY! DID YOU TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING?

LOOK! LOOK AT HIS CHEST!

GOOD LORD! GET ME SOME ACID... BOUGH! WE'VE GOT TO TAKE IT OFF! HURRY!

YOU GOT ME INTO THIS! THIS WAS ALL YOUR IDEA! IT'S YOUR FAULT! IF WE GET CAUGHT! WELL... I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE THE BLAME! I CAN SAY YOU DID IT!



HELEN! PUT DOWN THAT GUN! YOU'VE HAD THIS GUN! THE COPS...
I'LL GET IT OFF MYSELF... AFTER I'VE KILLED YOU IN 'SELF DEFENSE'!

THE TINY PISTOL IN HELEN'S HAND BARRICKED THREE... AND LARRY CRUMPLED FORWARD, FACE DOWN TO THE TILE FLOOR...



...AND I'LL STILL HAVE STEVE'S BLOOD!

BUT WHEN THE POLICE CAME, THEY FOUND HELEN SITTING BESIDE STEVE'S BODY... SURROUNDED BY ACID, AMMONIA, BLEACHES, AND SANDPAPER! SHE WAS BABBLING INCOHERENTLY...

SHE'S... OFF HER ROCKERS! COMPLETELY OUT OF HER MIND!

SHE'S TRYING TO REMOVE THIS OLD BUT'S TATTOO? HEY! LOOK AT IT, BURT!



THE TATTOO ON STEVE'S CHEST HAD CHANGED! IT NO LONGER DEPICTED THE THREE OF THEM ARM IN ARM! INSTEAD, IT SHOWED LARRY HOLDING STEVE FAST, WHILE HELEN STRUCK HIM WITH A CLUB! AND ON THE CHEST OF THE TATTOOED PICTURE OF STEVE WAS A TINY TATTOO! IT SHOWED LARRY HOLDING STEVE FAST, WHILE HELEN STRUCK HIM WITH A CLUB! AND ON THE CHEST...



THE END

WELDON! A PICTURE IN A PICTURE IN A PICTURE... AND SO ON, E.H., KIDNEY! THE POINT? THINK ABOUT IT! ALL WAS THAT HELEN COULDN'T RUN OUT THE TATTOO AFTER SHE'D KILLED OUT LARRY AND STEVE? WHICH JUST GOES TO PROVE THAT THE PEN IS SWIFTER



THAN THE SWORD! OR IS IT A NEEDLE! A TATTOO ARTIST, YES! OH, WELL! S NEVER WAS A STIGLER FOR DETAILED DONT'AW ME DOWN! WELDON! NEXT COMES... YOU SHOULD PARDON THE EXPRESSION... THE FEET! AH... SO AHEAD! READ IT!

THE OLD WITCH'S NICHE

President and CEO—Stephen A. Goppo

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Dear OW,

I loved "Extermination" (HAUNT 10). "Ear Today, Gore Tomorrow!" was another great story. I have a question: Why can't you order "The Complete Haunt" from Russ Cochran? I know there is one because I have #11 of it. But it's not on the order form. I agree with David C. Dain and Patty Hammond (HAUNT 9) that you should rerun "Attack of the Issue" features of the 50's.

John Brown

Hurman, TN

Ah, but you CAN order the hardback EC LIBRARY component, "The Complete Haunt"! All five volumes! (Spinal money!) Be popular (with us)! —OW

[To whom it may concern?]

The Vault-Keeper, The Old Witch, and the Crypt-Keeper: I was wondering if these guys are brothers or something like that? I mean, they all have a big role on their chins.

I think that your HAUNT OF FEAR series is not very good except for that one story "My Uncle Earl". It's really awesome, especially at the end. By the way I am a real good fan of all three of the hoars. Please don't ever go out of business!! Your Buddy

Derek Steed, 42 years old

Alliance, OH

"Star" (HAUNT 10) has many fans, but you're my first fan who doesn't like my book!

The Crypt-Keeper and The Vault-Keeper have mates, I have a beauty mark! —OW

[If we have mates, YOU have a SOPHOMORE] —CK & VK

"Extermination..." —OW

Dear Old Witch,

I loved the story "Gross Business!" in HAUNT 10. However, if you guys, especially the Crypt-Keeper, could you ask him if he could send me an autographed copy of CRYPT? I like scary books like DOODLEBUMPS. I too wannabes, too! I am nine years old and one of your biggest fans!

Elliot Britz

Waco, Texas, WI

DOODLEBUMPS is a series of scary story books for the youngest set, ain't it? Well-huh, you thought I'd be too old to be hap, eh? Unlike CK, I read books WITHOUT pictures! —OW

Dear OW,

Great job on HAUNT #10, the front cover of the book was great! I also loved all the stories in the book! On the "Crypt" show I saw "Dig That Cat: He's a Real Goner!" I can't wait till that story appears in HAUNT. Another story I loved from one of your books was "Stained in Horror!" I loved the end of the story when you were sliding down the spiral staircase, after I read that story I tried to slide down my staircase but fell off the balcony! I would love to have HAUNT #1 but I can't find it anywhere!

Starlyn Reid

Wardley, ENGLAND

Hee-hee! Dig this, Cat, HAUNT #1 is not real gonad!

WE'VE got copies, see the details of the end of this column. "Stained" was MY story in VAULT 12. "Dig" will be in HAUNT 21. (PS: After my close encounter with the newest post on that staircase, I'd rather have taken off the balcony!) —OW

Dear OW,

I have a question for you that I've been meaning to ask for some time now. CK and VK have their own title—shall we say houses. Why don't you? I mean, if those guys get their own Crypt and Vault, then why can't you have a mausoleum or something? I think you should file a complaint. Get liberated, girl! It's the 90s! Women have rights, too! If it weren't for us hard-working women, men wouldn't be here! Take action, honey! Show them that you're not just an Old Witch!

Audrey Sheehan

Now that I'm an employee of Gametone, I've moved out of the Dumpster and into a Port-a-John. No glass eating here! —OW

What is different about the EC comics is they were so imaginative and well thought out. I really enjoy reading them and then a year or so down the road they are fun to read again.

I also wanted to tell you about my "Kids," who really like me to read them the science fiction ECs. "The Kids" are characters I paint and write about for children. (They are Jerry Garcia, Little Lamboos, Baby Robby Rabbit and Darnish Dinosaur, and they all live with me, Ranger Gary Michael, in my Magical Park.

Here is a picture of them.



Gary Michael Lewis

Santa Rosa, CA

Your color photo of your full color painting may look murky here, sorry! You also included your 1994 Christmas letter featuring a story with The Kids and Ranger Gary, for which we thank you! —OW

Dear OW,

I'd like to compliment you on a job well-done. I've been a subscriber for a couple of years and this is my first letter to you (I am ashamed of myself). So please be gentle, don't be too angry.

I remember the first time I ever picked up THE HAUNT OF FEAR. I was feeling depressed. My hobby was working late, our air conditioner had broken down and it was hot outside, there was nothing good on Cable and I remembered that a friend of mine had given me a comic book. She said you were unusual. So I dug it out of the garbage can and started to read it. I LOVED IT!

So I subscribed. Do you know what makes that night even more memorable? After I read the HAUNT, a thunderstorm with lightning started and the power went off!

Jana Rubenbaugh

Columbus, OH

A host from the blue enlightened pool

—OW

HEY HORRORHEADS & EC FAN-ADDICTS: HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR, EC's only officially authorized fanzine (still in production) is MOVING. Our new publishing mailing address is: Sam Kingston's HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR, 2648 East Manor Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84121.

Don't miss our latest (print) publication: Issue #4 is available for \$3.00 (\$5.00 foreign) with lots of nauseating suggestions of title vids for EC (unless? #5 will be available in late July and will feature a brand new Johnny Craig cover being designed for HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR). Don't miss this one! Pre-order your copy today!

We also welcome with freshly opened arms your comments, art suggestions, stories and anything you might want to acknowledge regarding your love for the EC horror comics. So drop us a line and/or send for the free Take cover!! Sam Kingston's HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR, 2648 East Manor Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84121.

Dear Russ,

Firstly, thank you for reprinting EC art. You're doing the comic world (good by) bringing these hidden treasures to light. I first came across them in a comic shop's EC section. I bought every one they had (mostly ROP and GLAD #4-pgs).

Shortly thereafter I became wise to the 32-pg sequentials I love it! Keep printing them! The Annals are an ingenious idea.

As for so my favorites: SHOCK, TWO-FISTED and VALUITY CRYPT is just too crazy! Your choice to do FRONTLINE was wise, now there will be 2 war, 3 suspense, 2 govt, 3 horror—and no humor! Please try to get PANIC in the lineup—I'm already gutted at 1, 2, 3 & 4 (originals) and seeing them reissued would save me a lot of money and wear-and-tear on mine. You can print my address. I need pen-pals. I'm starved. How about a nice 1st delivery boy?

Christian Douthett

5015 Westheimer #1504
Houston, TX 77056

And maybe I'll send my recipe for curried quarter, messenger (marinade and poached postpartum on toast). Bon appetit!

—OW

Dear Old Witch,

THE HAUNT OF FEAR #11 was another winner! The stories were mesmerizing and unpredictable. The EC horror titles are some of the best entertainment around. They are the epitome of comic book fanor. Any one of these tales could be made into full-length motion pictures, and be

potential Oscar winners. 'Entertaining Comics,' indeed! These tales are so gripping. Not even when you read them over and over, they're still as exciting as the first time you read them.

And Old Witch, you're not ugly at all. You're great. At least to a vampire like me you are. What say you and I grab lunch at Chez Dracula some time?

Well, like the Beatles said, "Here Comes The Sun," and that means it's time for me to go, otherwise I'll be dehydrated and scorched by that burning sunlight. But before I go my dear Old Witch, please print the address to my doombook, as I like to hear from fans from around the globe. Thanks, Witchy-Witchy!

Tony Martinez, age 17

8041 S California AV
Chicago, IL 60620

At Chez Drac, you grab lunch on the run!

—OW

Dear Old Witch,

(You're my favorite.) I've been reading the EC comics since they first appeared in the 50s. My mother would destroy them, so to prevent that I would staple covers from "acceptable" comics over the EC comic. When I was in college I did a Baccalaureate essay on the discrimination against EC comics during the 1950s.

I own CRYPT, SHOCK, CRIME and PANIC in the hardbound editions. I'm going to complete my collection with the current line of comics you're publishing. These comic books are the greatest thing that has ever been published in the history of comics! They are better than the originals! I hope you can do the entire line. Do you think you really can? It would be an honor to have my letter published in your comic! (Issue you're the greatest!

Jim Armstrong

Paris, TX, NY

Dear People

I want to say hello and tell I really like your books. They're certainly better than tell the stuff some of the bigger companies put out. Especially better than DC. I mean, how many times will they kill poor Super off?

George Taylor

Cassini, SC

Once per 50 years, is my guess—not counting "imaginary stories!"

—OW

Also available this month are the new additions to the EC reprint line: FRONTLINE, COMBAT, and CRIME. Watch for CRYPT, SHOCK, SCIENCE and SHOCK next month. Don't forget HAUNT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED. See them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (ask our ad in this month for details).

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, #2 each subject to availability. \$5 volume up (this month #3, \$5 #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #19, #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28, #29, #30, #31, #32, #33, #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #39, #40, #41, #42, #43, #44, #45, #46, #47, #48, #49, #50, #51, #52, #53, #54, #55, #56, #57, #58, #59, #60, #61, #62, #63, #64, #65, #66, #67, #68, #69, #70, #71, #72, #73, #74, #75, #76, #77, #78, #79, #80, #81, #82, #83, #84, #85, #86, #87, #88, #89, #90, #91, #92, #93, #94, #95, #96, #97, #98, #99, #100, #101, #102, #103, #104, #105, #106, #107, #108, #109, #110, #111, #112, #113, #114, #115, #116, #117, #118, #119, #120, #121, #122, #123, #124, #125, #126, #127, #128, #129, #130, #131, #132, #133, #134, #135, #136, #137, #138, #139, #140, #141, #142, #143, #144, #145, #146, #147, #148, #149, #150, #151, #152, #153, #154, #155, #156, #157, #158, #159, #160, #161, #162, #163, #164, #165, #166, #167, #168, #169, #170, #171, 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Enclosed is a drawing that you might like to include on your "Fine Arts" page. It was inspired by Little Freddy in "The Martian Monies" from **WING SCIENCE** #8.

Nora Richman

Orantheos, VT

Wow! Even I had second thoughts about running this site, till I read the story in question. Little Freddy was a standup dude, just misinformed! And, to judge from this drawing, a little MALFORMED, too! Ah, well, that's the way it goes in **THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S PAGE OF...**

FINE ARTS #1

Dear Mr. Coolman,

Your EC "comics" are awful. The artwork is awful and the stories are outrageous and stupid. Any idiot could draw and write better. The only reason I subscribe to all 9 titles is to read the dumb letters pages and for the artwork in the Fine Arts pages.

In protest, I also buy extra copies of each title at the shop and rip them to shreds in front of everyone while announcing "EC Comics are awful and only morons read this trash." However, I save the "Fine Arts" and letters pages. Disgusted.

Ron Slay

North Riverside, IL

We're of two minds on you here, Ron. Ed Aron (the anonymous editor, who puts together the issues & this page) sends a resounding cheer and two thumbs. We Ghoulamations were going to lynch you till we realized you PAY FOR the comics before you trash them! But be forewarned, you're walking the fine line!

—CK

Send your contrbs (not returnables, not too long, not too big, legible double-spaced text &/or bold black art. Warning...we edit) to:

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S PAGE OF FINE ARTS GEMSTONE

POB 488

WEST PLAINS MO 65775

We accept contributions, but would prefer to learn about artists in other contributions. We edit for clarity, brevity and tone. We occasionally offend artist sensibilities and we hope artists are smart enough to not mind. The effort in artwork submission is to be as real as your address in the individual contributions.

I have enclosed a poem. I hope you find it "enjoyable." Please print my address:

EATING ETIQUETTE

I eat eyeballs bloody
I've done it all my life
It makes them taste kind of funny,
But it keeps them on my list!
And when the blood becomes dry,
I give the bloody snits a little lick
And place the eyeballs back on,
And the blood makes them stick!

Brandon Hendrix

POB 117

Broken Bow, OK

Careful eating that talk, or you'll wind up reading poetry with forked tongues! (Y'know, I'm kinda glad there isn't an ill for this poem!) —CK



Gregg Smith, Stamford, CT; after Jack Davis



Shelia Rader ("print my address") 3225 E Baseline #2061, Gilbert, AZ 85234; after Al Feldstein



Ramiro J. Roman, Glendale, CA; after HSO

Although I try to weed out obvious scribbles, I enjoyed these three takes on the three versions of me, each has an individual style in rendering. And, the subject is fascinating! —CK

**HERE'S A SPIRITED HORROR
YARN! I CALL IT ...
TILL DEATH
DO WE PART!**



THE YELLOW CIRCLE OF LIGHT SHOT FROM ERNIE'S FLASHLIGHT AND BLANDED AGAINST THE DARKENED OFFICE! ERNIE GRINNED AT TOMMY...

"THERE SHE IS, BOY! SHE'S
ALL FOURS!"

"SO FAR, SO GOOD! KEEP
YOUR EARS OPEN FOR
THE NIGHT WATCHMAN
WHILE I GO TO WORK!"



THE ONE CALLED TOMMY TOOK THE FLASHLIGHT FROM THE ONE CALLED ERNIE AND MOVED TOWARD THE SAFE! HE KNELT DOWN BEFORE IT AND OPENED THE SMALL BLACK HAD...

"WHAT TIME IS IT,
ERNIE?"

"ELEVEN-THIRTEEN! YOU
GOT SEVENTEEN MINUTES!
THE WATCHMAN DOESN'T
GET HERE TILL HALF-
PAST!"



TOMMY TOOK A SMALL PIECE OF EMPTY CLOTH FROM THE BLACK BAG AND BEGAN TO RUB HIS FINGER-TIPS WITH IT (THE SCRATCHY SOUND ECHOED THROUGH THE ROOM...)



MAKE 'ER GOOD AND SENSITIVE, KID?

DON'T WORRY! I WILL! I WANT THAT THIRTY BRAND AS MUCH AS YOU DO!

TOMMY LINED UP CLOSE TO THE SAFE, PRESSING HIS EAR AGAINST IT! HE BEGAN TO TURN THE DIAL-GRATED KNOB WITH HIS RAW FINGERS...

TOUGH ONE, TOMMY!

NOT BAD! NEEDS AN OILING, SO IT'LL BE EASY!



THE OFFICE WAS SILENT EXCEPT FOR THE HEAVY BREATHING OF THE TWO MEN! ERNIE STRAINED HIS EARS... LISTENING...

IT'S ELEVEN-THIRTY, TOMMY! NOW'S IT COMIN'?

TAKE IT EASY! I'M BETTIN' IT!



THE SWEEP-SECOND-HAND ON ERNIE'S WRIST WATCH SANKED SWIFTLY AROUND THE DIAL! ONE MINUTE... TWO... THREE! ERNIE LIT A CIGARETTE NERVOUSLY...



YUH GOT LESS THAN EIGHT MINUTES, TOMMY!

SHUT UP, HUNT I'M WORKIN' AS FAST AS I CAN!

SUDDENLY A SHARP CLICK REBOUNDED THROUGH THE BLACKNESS! TOMMY HEAVED A SIGH OF RELIEF! HE SWUNG OPEN THE HEAVY THICK DOOR...



THERE YARE, ERNIE!

HURRY! ERNIE! THE DOUGH WE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE YET!

TOMMY BEGAN TO STUFF THE HEAVILY BANNED PACKETS OF CRISP SWEET BILLS INTO THE SMALL BLACK BAG! SOON THE SAFE WAS EMPTY AND THE LATCHED BULGED FULL...



OKAY? NOT IT ALL? LET'S BLOW!

C'MON! WE'LL HEAD FOR THE BACK STAIRS AND... LISTEN! FOOTSTEPS!

THE TWO MEN STIFFENED! HEAVY FOOTFALLS APPROACHED OUTSIDE THE OFFICE DOOR! THE BLACK SHADOW OF A MAN IN A PEAKED CAP FELL ACROSS THE DULL SHINY TRANSLUCENT GLASS...



THE NIGHT WATCHMAN!

THE BELL-TOLL IS EARLY! IT'S ONLY ELEVEN TWENTY-THREE!

THE TWO MEN COWERED IN THE DARKNESS AS THE SHADOW LOOMED LARGER AND LARGER...

AS SOON AS HE OPENS THE DOOR, SCOP AIR AND MAKE A BREAK FOR IT!

RIGHT? QUIET! HE'S COMING IN!



THE BRASS KNOB TURNED AND THE DOOR SWUNG INWARD! A UNIFORMED WATCHMAN PEERED INTO THE BLOOM! THE DEFEATED SAFE CRUMLED AT HIS...

WHAT THE...! WHO THE SAFE'S BEEN...

GET HIM, ERNIE!



ERNIE BROUGHT THE BLACK-JACK DOWN ON THE WATCHMAN'S HEAD WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH, AND THE GRAY-CLAD GUARD CRUMPLED TO THE FLOOR



THE TWO MEN DARTED FROM THE OFFICE AND DOWN THE STAIRS...



SUDDENLY THE BUILDING WAS FILLED WITH THE EAR-SPLITTING CLANGING OF BELLS...

THE ALARM! SOMEBODY SET OFF THE ALARM!

THE WATCHMAN! YOU DIDN'T HIT HIM HARD ENOUGH!



THE SAFE-ROBBERS HURTLIED DOWN THE REMAINING FLIGHT OF STEPS THREE AT A TIME! THEY BURST THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR OUT INTO THE GOLD RENT AIR...

LOOK!

A SQUAD CAR!



THE DESERTED STREET WAS FILLED WITH THE SOUNDS OF ALARMS, FEET AND SHOOTING VOICES.

THERE THEY GO!

STOP OR WE SHOOT!



SHOTS RANG OUT! THE EXPLOSIONS ECHOED OFF THE FACED OF THE SILBERT BUILDINGS! ERNIE FELT A SEARING PAIN AS A RED-HOT SLUG STRUCK HIM BETWEEN THE SHOULDERS, RIPPING INTO HIS CHEST! HE STUMBLER FORWARD...COLLAPSING ON THE PAVEMENT...



TOMMY'S HAMMERING FOOTSTEPS FADED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT! ERNIE LAY FACE DOWNWARD IN THE BUTTER...CHOKING OUT A DRY AFTER HIS FLEEING FATHER.



SILENCE CLOSED IN! THEN ERNIE HEARD THE CLATTER OF FEET AS THE POLICEMEN CAME UP TO HIM! ONE OF THEM ROLLED ERNIE OVER...



THE COPS RUSHED AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS! WHAT A BREAK! THIS WAS ERNIE'S CHANCE! HE LOOKED UP! AN ASH CAN TOWERED OVER HIM, REAPED WITH LITTER! ERNIE REACHED UP, CLOSING HIS FINGERS OVER ITS SLIMY RIM...



ERNIE USED EVERY OUNCE OF HIS STRENGTH TO PULL HIMSELF TO HIS FEET! FOR A FLEETING MOMENT, HE HAD THE HORRIBLE FEAR THAT HE COULDN'T MAKE IT! BUT FINALLY...WITH A TREMENDOUS EFFORT...HE STOOD SWAYING IN THE SHIVERY WIND...



ERNIE STAMBERED OFF DOWN A DARK ALLEY! RATS SCURRIED AWAY AS HE CRAMMED HIMSELF ALONG! BACK ON THE STREET, HE COULD HEAR THE SOUNDS OF POLICE WHISTLES, AND RUST-ROCKS CRACKING ON THE COLD PAVEMENT.



ERNIE STUMBLER DOWN THE ALLEY...FORCED HIMSELF THROUGH A BROKEN FENCE...AND DARTED ACROSS AN OVER LOT! HE PEERED AROUND A BUILDING...



NO ONE WAS IN SIGHT! ERNIE DASHED ACROSS THE COBBLE-STONED BUTTER AND INTO ANOTHER ALLEY...



BEEP...BEEP! EVERY-THING'S...GONNA...BE...ALL RIGHT...NOW!

HALF AN HOUR LATER...HALF AN HOUR OF LIMPING THROUGH BACK YARDS, TOTTERING ACROSS WACKY LOYS, AND SCALING WORN BOARD FENCES...ERNIE FINALLY REACHED THE FLAT...



TOMMY? OPEN UP! IT'S ME! ERNIE!

ERNIE COULD HEAR SOMEONE MOVING AROUND INSIDE! HE OPENED THE DOOR CAUTIOUSLY...



TOMMY! I KNOW YOU'D GET AWAY! I GOT HIT, TOMMY!

HUH?

TOMMY IGNORED ERNIE! HE BRUSHED PAST HIM, CAUGHT HOLD OF THE OPEN DOOR, AND SLAMMED IT SHUT...



TOMMY! ANYCHA GLAD TO SEE ME?

STUPID FOOL! NAHHA NO AM SET IN THE WAY OF A BLUE!

SLAM

ERNIE SHUFFLED TO THE DOOR AND PELL ACROSS IT.



YOUR BETTA GET ME A DOCTOR, TOMMY I'M DYIN'!

WELL, I AMT GONNA HAVE AROUND HERE! I'M GONNA HEAD FOR THE BORDER!

TOMMY HURRIEDLY BEGAN TO PACK A BAG! HE PICKED UP THE SMALL BLACK BATHTEL FILLED WITH THE STOLEN BILLS AND STUFFED IT INTO THE SUITCASE...



TOMMY! YOU AMT GONNA RUN OUT ON ME, ARE YOU?

NOT ME! I'M NOT GONNA GET CAUGHT!

TOMMY FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR AND PEEPED OUT! ERNIE BEGAN TO SOB! HE REACHED OUT A SHAKING HAND...PLEADING...



TOMMY! WAIT! DON'T LEAVE ME! DON'T RUN OUT ON ME! GET ME A DOC. FOR, PLEASE!

THIRTY GRAND! THAT AMT BAD! NOT BAD AT ALL!

TOMMY LOOKED BACK...HESTITATED ANEW. THEN LEFT! ERNIE STAGGERED TO HIS FEET SCREAMING AFTER HIM...



TOMMY! WHAT ABOUT MY
OUT? HALF OF THE
DOUGH IS MINE!

WHEN ERNIE REACHED THE STREET, TOMMY WAS NO
WHERE IN SIGHT! ERNIE STUMBLES AROUND...CALLING
HIM! PEOPLE PASSING ERNIE SEEMED NOT TO NOTICE
THE HISTERICAL FUGITIVE...



TOMMY! COME BACK! DON'T
LEAVE ME! DON'T
LEAVE ME!

ERNIE CONTINUED GOING...STRUGGLING TO KEEP ON HIS
FEET. WANDERING AIMLESSLY THROUGH THE SLEEPING
CITY! A POLICEMAN, HOLDING BACK A SMALL CROWD OF
CURIOUS ONLOOKERS, DID NOT SEE HIM PASS DOWN THE
ROPED-OFF BLOCK.



WHAT
HAPPENED?

SOME GUY
ROBBERED A
GUY!

TOMMY?
WHERE
ARE YOU?

ALL RIGHT!
KEEP BACK!
KEEP BACK!

ERNIE APPROACHED THE GROUP OF POLICE
OFFICERS AND DETECTIVES GATHERED ON THE
SIDEWALK OF THE ROPED-OFF BLOCK...



I...I'VE BEEN SHOT!
YOU GOT TO GET ME
TO A DOCTOR!

GRAT, FLASHEE!
TAKE HIM AWAY!

THE POLICE OFFICERS DID NOT NOTICE ERNIE...DID NOT HEAR
HIM PLEADING FOR HELP! THEIR ATTENTIONS WERE FOCUSED ON
THE PRORATE FORM OF A MAN LYING IN A POOL OF BLOOD ON
THE COLD SIDEWALK! ERNIE LOOKED DOWN AT THE CORPSE! ITS
WIDE SLATED STAINING EYES LOOKED BACK AT ERNIE! THE MAN'S
FACE SEEMED FAMILIAR! VERY FAMILIAR...



GOOD LORD! THAT...THAT'S ME LYING
THERE! I...I'M DEAD! DEAD!

HEY, LIEUTENANT! JUST
CAME OVER THE RADIO!
THEY GOT THE OTHER
ONE TRYIN' TO LEAVE
TOWN! HE'S DEAD, TOO!

HEE, HEE! "WELL, ERNIE...NO WONDER!
TOMMY DIDN'T HEAR YOU! YOU DIDN'T
STAND A CHANCE OF A CHANCE OF
HIM HEARING YOU! BUT, DON'T
LOSE SPIRIT!" HE'LL BE ABLE
TO HEAR YOU NOW! OH, BY THE
WAY, THE GUY FOUND SOMETHING
STRANGE ON ERNIE'S CORPSE!
HEE, HEE! HIS WATCH! IT WAS



FOUR MINUTES
SLAP! LED TO HIS
WIND-UP, EH? AND IF
YOU'D LIKE TO WIND-
UP, BEHIND THE EIGHT
BALL, THAT IS...JUST
SEND FOR MY
BACK ISSUES!
READ MY CORNER...
THE OLD MYTON'S
MOON, FOR THE INFO
ON SETTING 'EM

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! I SEE BY YOUR SHODDING FACES THAT YOU'RE HUNGRY FOR ANOTHER TERROR-TALE FROM MY COLLECTION HERE IN THE CRYPT! WELL, THIS ONE OUGHT TO SATISFY YOUR APPETITE! YES, IT'S ME... THE CRYPT-KEEPER, YOUR HOST IN THE CRYPT OF TERROR! COME IN! I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU A TALE GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOUR HAIR STAND ON END AND YOUR BLOOD FREEZE IN YOUR... AH, YOU KNOW THE OLD OIL 'OIL' THAT REMINDS ME OF DEEP-FAT-FRYING, WHICH IS WHAT OUR STORY CONCERNS ITSELF WITH! THAT AND BARBECUING! I CALL THIS DELICIOUS DELIRIUM DELFINE.

WHAT'S COOKIN'?



THE SHAGGILY-DRESSED MAN FLOPS UP TO THE ROADSIDE EATING-PLACE, FLUNG OVER THE RICKETY SCREEN DOOR, LETS IT SLAM RESOUNDINGLY BEHIND HIM, AND LOOKS AROUND! HIS GAZE SWIFTS, FROM THE EMPTY TABLES AND CHAIRS TO THE SANDST-COVERED FLOOR, TO THE COUNTER WITH ITS LINE OF EMPTY STOOLS... TO THE GLARING FACES OF THE FOOD-STAND'S TWO PROPRIETORS...



NOT VERY
JUSY, ARE
YOU?

SO ON,
SORAM!

NO
HANDOUTS!

THE ONE WITH THE TATTERED CLOTHES SHAKES HIS HEAD AND SMILES AT THE TWO BEHIND THE COUNTER...

YOU ARE *SHRINE*, GENTLEMEN! I AM NOT THE ONE WHO IS LOOKING FOR A HANDOUT! YOU ARE! THIS PLACE IS A FAILURE. ISN'T IT?

MORE OF TEN BURN-REDS!

YOU WANT SOMETHING TO EAT, OR DON'T YOU?

NOT RIGHT NOW! FIRST, LET ME FINISH! IN THE THREE WEEKS SINCE YOU FOOLISHLY PURCHASED THIS... THIS SO-CALLED ROAD-SIDE RESTAURANT FROM ITS LAST OWNER, YOU HAVE HAD A TOTAL OF SIXTY-TWO CUSTOMERS! HARDLY ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU IN BUSINESS! IN FACT, I WOULD SAY TWO MORE MONTHS OF THAT KIND OF BUSINESS... AN AVERAGE OF THREE MEALS SOLD A DAY... WILL BUST YOU!

YOU MEAN YOU'VE BEEN OUT THERE COUNTIN' OUR CUSTOMERS FOR THREE WEEKS?

EXACTLY! I ALSO COUNTED THE NUMBER OF CARS THAT PASSED ON THE HIGHWAY OUTSIDE IN THE SAME PERIOD! KNOW HOW MANY? TWENTY-TWO THOUSAND! OVER NINE HUNDRED A DAY! ABOUT TWO CARS EACH MINUTE!

WOW! THAT MANY!

YES! IF YOU COULD STOP, SAY, ONE OUT OF TEN OF THOSE CARS, YOU'D SERVE A HUNDRED MEALS A DAY OR MORE! THINK WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN!

A HUNDRED? BOY! THAT'D BE SOME-THING!

FEAR. SMART BUTHOW YOU BORNNA STOP 'IM?

THAT, GENTLEMEN... IS MY SECRET! AND MY OFFER IS VERY SIMPLE! I'LL WORK FOR NOTHING UNTIL THIS PLACE SHOWS A PROFIT!

FOR NOTHING?

WELL... FOR MY MEALS! I'LL SLEEP IN THE BACK! BUT... AFTER I SHAPE THE PLACE, INSTALL MY OWN METHODS AND IDEAS... AND THE BUSINESS BEGINS TO SHOW A PROFIT INSTEAD OF A LOSS... THEN I GET FIFTY PERCENT! HALF THE PROFITS... THOSE'RE MY TERMS!

THE HUGE FAT ONE LOOKS AT THE SMALL SKINNY ONE! THEY'VE BURN THEIR LIVES BAYNED INTO THIS PLACE! THEIR SITUATION IS DESPERATE! THEY'VE LOST STEADILY! THEIR BANK ACCOUNT IS ALMOST GONE! ANY OFFER, ANY WAY TO SHOW A PROFIT... SOUNDS GOOD TO THEM...

WHAT DO YOU SAY, HENRIAN?

HALF OF A PROFIT IS BETTER THAN NO PROFIT AT ALL. CHARLIE! LET'S GIVE 'IM A CHANCE!

THEN IT'S A DEAL!



DEAR, STRANGER...
IT'S A DEAL!
FOR I MADE THIS
PLACE PAY AND
YOU CAN HAVE
HALF THE
PROFITS!

SOOO? THEN
WE MIGHT
AS WELL GET
ACCOUNTED!
BY NAME'S
**ERIC
EDWARDS!**



A THICK-LIPPED MAN SPREADS
OVER THE FAT ONE'S JOWLY
FACE...

I'VE HENNER DUTTER!
THIS IS CHARLIE
BARBER!

GLAD TO
KNOW YOU
NEWMAN...
CHARLIE!
NOW HERE'S
MY PLAN!



THIS PLACE IS LIKE *EVERY
OTHER* HOAGSHEE EATERY ON
THE HIGHWAY! WE'VE GOT TO
SPECIALIZE! YOU'VE HEARD
THE EXPRESSION, 'JACK OF ALL
TRADES... MASTER OF NONE'!
WELL, WE'RE GOING TO
SPECIALIZE IN ONE DIGN!
LISTEN! HEAR THAT?



FROM FAR OFF, A HOOSTER CROWS... ITS RASPING CRY
ECHOING THROUGH THE BALMY CALIFORNIA AIR...

ALL I HEAR IS
THE CHICKENS
ON THAT FARM
UP THE ROAD!

AND THEY'RE PROBABLY VERY
CHEAP! WE'RE GOING TO SPEC-
IALIZE IN *CHICKEN! NOTHING
BUT CHICKEN!*



THE NEXT DAY AND THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW
ARE FILLED WITH THE SOUNDS OF RASPING
AND RANMERING, AS ERIC BEGINS TO CHANGE
THE APPEARANCE OF THE LITTLE RESTAURANT...

WHAT'S HE
DOIN' UP THERE...

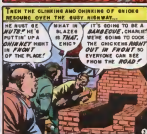
LOOKS LIKE ERIC'S
MAKIN' THE *ROOF*
HERRAN ?



SLOWLY THE SILHOUETTE OF A HUGE CHICKEN
TAKES SHAPE! LARGE BRILLIANTLY COLORED LET-
TERS ARE PAINTED ON IT... IT IS...

'THE CHICKEN COOP!'
HEY! THAT'S PRETTY
SMART, ERIC!

THIS OUGHT TO
ATTRACT ATTENTION!
OH, BOYS?



THEN THE CLIMBING AND CHIRPING OF BIRDS
RESOUNDS OVER THE BUSY HIGHWAY...

HE MUST BE
AUTE! HE'S
PATTIN' UP A
CHICKEN HEN
IN FRONT
OF THE PLACE!

WHAT IN
BLAZES
IS THAT,
ERIC?

IT'S GOING TO BE A
BARBECUE, CHARLIE!
WE'RE GOING TO COOK
THE CHICKENS *RIGHT
OUT IN FRONT* SO
EVERYONE CAN SEE
FROM THE ROAD!

SOON, A THICK DURL OF SMOKE RISES FROM THE BARBECUE. THE SUGGESTIVE, MOUTH-WATERING ODOR OF BROILING CHICKENS WAfts TOWARD THE BUSY HIGHWAY...

MMH? THAT SMELLS GOOD! OHAY, FLO! YEAN?
LOOK! BARBECUED CHICKEN! LET'S STOP AND EAT HERE, SAM!
HOW 'BOUT IT, MISS? HUHMY?
YIPPEE!



50 HIGHWAY TRAVELERS BEGIN TO STOP AT "THE CHICKEN COOP." THEY ORDER THE TABLES THAT HAVE BEEN MOVED OUTSIDE, WATCHING THEIR ORDERS TURN ON THE SPIT BEFORE THE RED-HOT COALS...

THIS SURE IS RICE, EH, BELLA?
SOME IDEA?
YUM! I'M STARVING!
DELICIOUS!



"THE CHICKEN COOP" BEGINS TO THRIVE, AS MORE AND MORE CUSTOMERS JAM THE NOVEL ESTABLISHMENT...

YOU CERTAINLY HAVE DONE WONDERS, ERIC!
WE'LL HAVE TO BUY SOME MORE TABLES TO ACCOMMODATE THE FLOOD OF CUSTOMERS!



AN ADJACENT TRACT OF LAND BORDERING THE HIGHWAY IS LEASED AND CLEARED...

THIS WILL MAKE ROOM FOR MORE GARS AND THE DEEP-FAT-FRYER!
DEEP-FAT-FRYER? WHAT'S THAT FOR?



SOUTHERN-STYLE FRIED CHICKEN? IT WILL BE A GOOD ADDITION TO THE BARBECUED FOUL!
YOU SURE ARE A SHREWD BUSINESS MAN, ERIC!



A LARGE THICK COPPER CAULDRON IS BROUGHT IN AND SOUTHERN-STYLE, DEEP-FAT-FRIED CHICKEN IS ADDED TO THE MENU...

MMHMY GOOD! THIS IS BETTER THAN MY MAMA'S IT WAS BAKED HOME IN SO-SO, SUN?
WET, THANK YOU, MA'AM!



THE FAME OF "THE CHICKEN COOP" BEGINS TO SPREAD...

MY HUSBAND AND I DROVE THIRTY MILES TO TRY YOUR BARBECUED CHICKEN!
REALLY? THAT IS MOST GRATIFYING, MA'AM!



THE SUCCESS OF *"THE CHICKEN COOP"*, WITH ITS OUTDOOR BARBECUE AND DEEP-FAT FRYER, IS UNBELIEVABLE! IN ONE YEAR, THE TINY FOOD-STAND GROWS TO A HUGE ROADSIDE EMPORIUM WITH A HUNDRED CAR PARKING LOT AND SEATS FOR TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY PEOPLE...

CHARLIE HERMAN: I THINK IT'S TIME TO BUILD A *NEW "CHICKEN COOP"*! I HAVE VISIONS OF SOMETHING *BIG*... SOMETHING *STUNNING*! WE'LL BUILD A *GIANT* BARBECUE CAPABLE OF BROILING *FIFTY CHICKENS* AT ONE TIME!

WHATEVER YOU SAY, ERIC!

CONSTRUCTION ON *"THE NEW CHICKEN COOP"* IS BEGUN! A BEAUTIFUL MODERNISTIC RESTAURANT RISES BESIDE ITS PREDECESSOR! THE BARBECUE IS *FRENCH-POUS*...

EACH ONE OF THESE *FOUR BIRDS* IS *TWELVE FEET LONG*! WE'LL CATCH THE *FAT DRIPPINGS* FROM THE BROILING CHICKENS IN THAT CATCH-PAN THERE, AND *USE* THE STUFF IN THE *DEEP-FAT-FRYER*!

WELL... THERE'S AN ECONOMICAL IDEA, EH, HERMAN?

THE *DEEP-FAT-FRYER* IS A HUGE CAULDRON OVER SIX FEET IN DIAMETER AND TWO FEET DEEP...

WE CAN *DEEP-FAT-FRY FIFTY CHICKENS* AT ONE TIME IN THIS THING!

WE CERTAINLY HAVE COME A LONG WAY, EH, CHARLIE?

WHEN *"THE NEW CHICKEN COOP"* IS OPENED TO THE PUBLIC, IT IS AN IMMEDIATE SUCCESS! EVEN WITH ITS HUGE CAPACITY, PEOPLE HAVE TO WAIT ON LINE FOR TABLES.

BOY! LOOK AT THAT *BARBECUE*!

AND LOOK AT THAT *CAULDRON*! Mmm! Smells GOOD, EH?

FORTUNE SMILES UPON THE THREE RESTAURATEURS! THE PROFIT'S FOUR IN! AND WITH MOUNTING PROFITS COMES MOUNTING GREED...

LOOK AT THESE *BOOKS*, HERMAN! WE NETTED *TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS* LAST WEEK!

THAT MEANS *FIVE HUNDRED A PIECE* FOR YOU AND ME!

AND... *ONE THOUSAND* FOR ERIC!

QUITE A LARGE SUM FOR HIM, EH, HERMAN? IF HE WASN'T *ARGUING*, WE COULD SPLIT IT *FIFTY-FIFTY*! NOT *FIVE HUNDRED*... BUT *ONE BRAND* FOR EACH OF US!

AH, BUT WHAT CAN WE DO? WE HAVE THAT *AGREEMENT*! WE MADE BACK WHEN WE WERE *NOTHING*!

IF... IF ERIC WERE TO... *ONE*, WE COULD... *FORGET* THE *AGREEMENT*!



FAT? HE'S HEALTHY AS A...

DON'T BE AS THICK AS YOU LOOK, YOU FAT IDIOT! I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT A NATURAL DEATH!



YOU YOU MEAN... MURDER??

YES! HE'S GOT NO FAMILY! HE CAME TO US PEN-LESS AND ALONE! SO HE PUT US ON TOP! SO WHAT? HE'S GOT A LADY'S SHARE! I SAY... LET'S TAKE IT ALL... FOR OURSELVES!



WHAT... WHAT'S YOUR PLAN, CHARLIE?

SIMPLE! ERIC BOUGHT HIMSELF THAT LITTLE RANCH HOUSE OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY! NOW... SUPPOSE... WHILE HE SLEPT, IT CAUGHT FIRE AND HE BURNED TO DEATH!



WHO... WHO'S THERE?

IT'S ME, ERIC! HERMAN! DON'T BE FRIGHTENED!



THE FAT ONE AND THE SKINNY ONE WERE SWIFT! SOON ERIC IS SECURELY TIED TO THE BED AND THE ROOM IS IN FLAMES...

SO LONG, ERIC! THANKS FOR ALL THE HELP!

FROM NOW ON, WE WORK ALONE! JUST ME AND HERMAN! FIFTY-FIFTY!



STICK THE GAG IN HIS MOUTH!

YEAH!

CHOKE...



AS THE TWO MEN WATCH FROM A VANTAGE POINT FAR DOWN ERIC'S PRIVATE ROAD, HOT SEARING TONGUES OF FIRE LEAP UPWARD OUT OF THE WINDOWS! SOON ERIC'S HIGH-NEW HOME IS A ROARING INFERNO...

CROW, HERMAN! LET'S GO BACK TO THE CHICKEN COOP AND MAKE PLANS!

BOY! THAT'S SOME FIRE!

BUT AS THE FAT ONE AND THE THIN ONE DISAPPEAR INTO THE NIGHT, A BLACKENED AND CHARRED FIGURE CRAWLS PAINFULLY FROM THE FLAMING HOUSE, HOWLING LIKE A DOG THAT HAS JUST BEEN STRUCK BY A CAR...



THE DOOR OF BURNED FLESH FILLS THE NIGHT AS THE SCORCHED FIGURE SNAPS ITSELF ALONG... ITS BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS OF AGONY ECHOING INTO THE DARKNESS...



IN THEIR OFFICE IN "THE NEW CHICKEN COOP," HERMAN AND CHARLES DRINK A TOAST TO THEIR FUTURE! BUT SUDDENLY THEIR BIRNS FREEZE ON THEIR FACES AS THE DOOR IS FLUNG OPEN...



IN THE MORNING, THE POLICE... INVESTIGATING THE BURNING OF ERIC'S NICE NEW HOUSE... STOP BY "THE NEW CHICKEN COOP" TO INQUIRE...



THEN ONE POLICEMAN'S BAZE FALLS UPON THE MEGANTIC BARBECUE...



HERMAN BITTER'S SIZZLING BODY HANGS FROM THE TOPMOST SPIT BEFORE THE NOW-BLOWING EMBERS! THE FAT REMOURED FROM HIS ONCE GREASE BODY BUBBLES AND BUBBLES IN THE IMMENSE CAULDRON! BOBBING IN THE BOILING ORANGE IS THE BROWNED-SEALED REMAINS OF CHARLIE MARTIN.



HEH, HEH! AND NOW MY TALE IS DONE, KIDDEST! WELL DONE! I HOPE IT'S LEFT YOU WITH A REVIVING APPETITE! WHAT? NOT HUNGRY? OH, THAT'S A SHAME! I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO JOIN ME... AT "THE CHICKEN COOP"! WHERE IS IT? WHY WAIT TIL YOU GO OUT DRIVING... LOOK FOR IT! THEY HAVE THE MOST DELICIOUS BROILED FOOD... OR DO YOU LIKE YOUR SOUTHERN-FRIED? WELL, THAT WINDS UP THE OLD RAB'S MAE! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MINE... TALES FROM THE DRYTT! 'BYE, NOW!



YOU SAY YOU
DON'T GET OUT MUCH?



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GLAD CRYPT #2



GLAD CRYPT #3



GLAD CRYPT #4



GLAD CRYPT #5



GLAD CRYPT #6



GLAD VAULT #1



GLAD VAULT #2



GLAD VAULT #3



GLAD VAULT #4



GLAD VAULT #5



GLAD VAULT #6



GLAD WEIRD #1



GLAD WEIRD #2



GLAD WEIRD #3



GLAD WEIRD #4



GLAD HAUNT #1



GLAD HAUNT #2

CONTENTS OF GLADSTONE EC COMICS

GLAD CRYPT #1 CRYPT 33 (1952) CRIME 37 (1952)	#2 CRYPT 35 (1952) CRIME 39 (1952)	#3 CRYPT 36 (1952) CRIME 40 (1952)	#4 CRYPT 38 (1952) CRIME 42 (1952)	#5 CRYPT 40 (1952) CRIME 44 (1952)	#6 CRYPT 42 (1952) CRIME 46 (1952)
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THE HAUNT OF

FEAR



NO. 13
JUNE

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FEATURING...



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



SWARTZ

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FOUND IN THESE OTHER "NEW TREND" E-C COMICS!



Issue of Book, May-June, 1950—Vol. 1, No. 10. Published Bi-monthly by Fiction Publishing Co., Inc., at 208 Lafayette St., New York 10, N. Y. William H. Green, Managing Editor; Albert H. Goldstein, Editor. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. (for rate information in the U. S. use postage—first) 100—class of 1120. Entire contents copyrighted 1950 by Fiction Publishing Co., Inc. Printed in the U. S. A. Unpublished manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped return address. No similarity between any of the characters, names or persons appearing in the magazine with any of those living or dead is intended, and any such similarity is purely coincidental.

Haunt of Fear, May-June, 1952—Vol. 1, No. 18. Published Bi-monthly by Fables Publishing Co., Inc., at 226 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y. William M. Gaines, Managing Editor. Albert B. Feldstein, Editor. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. One year subscription in the U. S. 60c plus 15c postage—total 75c—elsewhere \$1.00. Entire contents copyrighted 1952 by Fables Publishing Co., Inc. Printed in the U. S. A. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped return envelope. No similarity between any of the characters, names or persons appearing in this magazine with any of those living or dead is intended, and any such similarity is purely coincidental.

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! I SEE BY YOUR FLUSHED FACES THAT YOU'RE BACK FOR MORE MORSELS OF MADNESS, CRAZILY CONDUCTED BY ME, THE OLD WITCH, MISTRESS OF THE HAUNT OF FEAR! WELL, THE FIRE UNDER MY CAULDRON IS LIT, AND THE REVOLTING RECIPE IS READY FOR FETCHING! SO COME IN, DEAR FIENDS, AND SIT DOWN BESIDE ME! DOH YOUR DRINKLE-CUMPS, WROT YOUR HAPINGS ABOUT YOUR NECKS, AND I'LL DISH OUT ANOTHER OF MY TASTY TALES OF TERROR! I CALL THIS MORRO MOUTHFUL...

FOR THE LOVE OF DEATH!



MORTON MICHIGER DREW ASIDE THE CURTAIN AND PEELED OUT AT THE DESERTED STREET! HE LOOKED UP AND DOWN, SCOWLED, AND CURSED TO HIMSELF...

HMMMM! BLASTED NEWSPAPER BOY! HE'S LATE AGAIN! WHY CAN'T HE EVER GET MORE ON TIME?



FOR THE NEXT FIFTEEN MINUTES, MORTON PACED THE FLOOR NERVOUSLY, WAITING FOR THE FAMILIAR SOUND OF THE NEWSPAPER LANDING ON THE FRONT PORCH...



NEXT TIME THAT BRAT COMES FOR HIS MONEY, I'LL TELL HIM A THING OR TWO! HE

THE DALL THUD OUTSIDE HALTED MR. MACAWEER'S RAVING! HE DARTED TO THE WINDOW AND PEEPED OUT ANXIOUSLY! A SMALL BOY ON A BICYCLE ROLLED OFF DOWN THE STREET.



IT'S HIM! HE'S BEEN HERE! IT'S ABOUT TIME!

MORTON FLUNG OPEN THE FRONT DOOR AND RUSHED OUT TO THE FOLDED PAPER LYING ON THE WEATHERBEATEN PORCH.



PLEASE, PLEASE LET THERE BE ONE, PLEASE.

BACK INTO THE HOUSE THE WILD-EYED MAN SCURRIED, CLUTCHING THE PAPER TO HIS CHEST.



THERE WASN'T ONE YESTERDAY, OR THE DAY BEFORE! TWO WHOLE DAYS WITHOUT ONE! THERE HAS TO BE ONE TODAY! PLEASE!

MORTON'S GLANCE SPED UP AND DOWN THE OBITUARY COLUMN! SUDDENLY HIS SOMBER COUNTENANCE EXPLODED IN A LEERING GRIN.



THERE IS ONE! THERE'S A FUNERAL TODAY!



FEVERISHLY, MR. MACAWEER UNFOLDED THE PAPER AND BEGAN FLIPPING THE UNWANTED SECTIONS TO THE FLOOR.

WORLD NEWS, RAIN! LOCAL NEWS, PHEW! FINANCIAL! REAL ESTATE! AH! HERE IT IS! OBITUARIES...

HAPPINESS, SNEER ECSTASY, SHOWED ON MORTON'S FACE AS HE REAR THE DETAILS.



ADRIAN P. WASHINGTON, BELOVED HUSBAND AND FATHER, PASSED AWAY! SO AND SO, SUCH AND SUCH ON NEXT! SERVICES WILL BE HELD AT THE TERMINAL FUNERAL PARLOR AT 1:PM TODAY! LET'S SEE! IT'S 12:30 NOW! I CAN STILL MAKE IT!

MORTON WHISTLED A CHEERFUL LITTLE TUNE AS HE DRESSED HURRILY IN HIS BLACK SUIT! IT WAS JUST 1 P.M. WHEN HE ARRIVED AT THE TERMINAL FUNERAL PARLOR! HE JOINED THE LINE OF INSURGERS THAT WERE PASSING BEFORE THE OPEN CASSET.



WHAT AN EXQUISITE COFFIN!
HOW NICE THE DECASED LOOKS!
MY A SATIN LINING!

AFTER PAYING HIS RESPECTS TO THE DEAD MR. WOODEN-BOTTOM, MORTON TOOK A SEAT AT THE REAR OF THE CHAPEL, AND AWAITED THE SERVICES.



TOO BAD MR. WOODEN-BOTTOM CANNOT APPRECIATE THE DIGNITY HE NOW ENJOYS! IT'S SUCH A SHAME THAT ONE HAS TO DIE TO BE TREATED WITH SUCH ADORATION AND REVERENTIAL REGARD! PROBABLY, WHILE HE WAS ALIVE, HIS LOVED ONES HUMILIATED HIM!

A TEAR STOLE OUT OF THE CORNER OF ONE OF MR. MACABRETT'S EYES AND DRIPPED DOWN HIS CHEEK AS HE LISTENED TO MR. WOODEN-BOTTOM'S FUNERAL ORATION.

BUT HE LEAVES BEHIND THE MEMORIAL THE LOVE, THE ROMANCES HE SO UNSELFISHLY GAVE TO ALL WHO CROSSED HIS PATH OF LIFE! IN CONCLUSION



AFTER THE FUNERAL SERVICES, MORTON FOLLOWED A SMALL GROUP TO ONE OF THE WAITING CARS! ALL THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY HE STUDIED THE OTHER SORROWING PASSENGERS...

NOW THAT HE'S DEAD, THEY MOURN HIM! THEIR TEARS FALL FOR HIM.

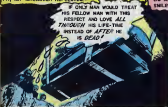


WHEN THE FUNERAL PROCESSION REACHED THE CEMETERY, MORTON FOLLOWED THE OTHERS TO THE OPEN TAVENING GRAVE.

THIS IS THE ONLY TIME IN A PERSON'S EXISTENCE WHEN HIS EVILS ARE FORGOTTEN AND HIS VIRTUES ARE EXTOLLED, FLOUNDED!



AS THE COFFIN WAS LOWERED SLOWLY INTO THE BLACK PIT, MR. MACABRETT REFLECTED:



IF ONLY MAN WOULD TREAT HIS FELLOW MAN WITH THE RESPECT AND LOVE ALL THROUGH HIS LIFE-TIME INSTEAD OF AFTER HE IS DEAD!

THEN THE RICH BLACK SOIL RESOURCES ON THE COFFIN-LID AS THE GRAVE WAS FILLED! MORTON MACABRETT SMILED SADLY.



THAT IS WHY I COME TO EVERY FUNERAL I CAN! BECAUSE HERE, AT LEAST, I CAN WATCH A PERSON BEING TREATED WITH THE DIGNITY HE NEVER ENJOYED WHILE HE LIVED!

AFTER THE GRAVE WAS COVERED AND THE OTHER MOURNERS HAD DEPARTED, MR. MACGIBBEN STROLLED AMONG THE GRAVESTONES, READING THE INSCRIPTIONS AND THE EPITAPHS ETCHED IN THEM.

"AH, MATILDA! WHAT A FUNERAL YOU HAD! BEAUTIFUL! JUST BEAUTIFUL! AND YOU, FENWICK! TOO BAD YOU COULDN'T APPRECIATE THE SPECTACULAR OF YOUR FINAL RITES! AND YOU, ALONZO... FANNY... ARIEN...

"FENWICK APPEARED! AM I REMEMBER HIS FUNERAL! IT WAS SO STately! AND 'MATILDA NICKELBUNT' THERE WAS A FINAL HOMAGE!



TOO BAD ALL OF YOU COULDN'T EXPERIENCE THE DIGNITY AND SOLEMNITY YOU RECEIVED!

AS FOR MYSELF, I AM ALONE IN THE WORLD! MY FUNERAL WILL NEVER HAVE SUCH POMP... SUCH LAVISHNESS AS YOURS HAD! OH, IF IT WERE ONLY POSSIBLE FOR ME TO ENJOY IT... JUST ONCE...

SUPP... BUT WHY NOT?



MORTON MACGIBBEN WALKED ALL THE WAY HOME FROM THE CEMETERY THAT NIGHT... FORMULATING HIS PLANS.



"FANNY'S WINKLESON! HE'S THE RICHEST MAN IN TOWN! HIS FUNERAL WOULD REALLY BE SOMETHING!

AND I'D KNOW HOW IT FEELS... EVERY MOMENT OF IT! THE LYING IN STATE... THE FUNERAL ORATION... THE SOLEMN RIDE IN THE FLOWER-BEGGARDED HEARSE... THE LOWERING OF THE COFFIN INTO THE GRAVE... EVERYTHING! IT WOULD BE HAPPENING TO ME!



HEE, HEE! WUTTY AS A **FRUIT-SAFE**. THIS MORTY-BOY. EH, KIDDES? DID YOU EVER WANT TO KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO BE THE **STAR ATTRACTION AT A FUNERAL**? WELL! IT TAKES ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE/LET'S GOON AND SEE WHAT **MORRIS MACABBER** HAS IN MIND!

THAT NIGHT, MORTON CUT THE **OBITUARY NOTICE OF THE FUNERAL**. HE'D ATTENDED THAT DAY FROM THE NEWSPAPER AND PASTED IT IN HIS **SCRAPBOOK**...

HMNN! NUMBER TWO HUNDRED AND NINE! NOT BAD... FOR ONLY TWO YEARS...

YEP! THIS CREEP'S BEEN WATCHIN' THE 'GENTS' AND ATTENDING FUNERALS FOR TWO YEARS! NOW HE'S SET ON **SEEKING** HOW IT ACTUALLY **FEELS**. INSTEAD OF JUST **WATCHIN'**? AFTER FINISHING THE SCRAP-BOOK-FASTING, MORTON WENT INTO THE KITCHEN.

I'LL HAVE TO **POWEROO** THE **OPEN-COFFIN CEREMONY** FOR THE **SAKE OF SAFETY!** THIS **KNIFE** WILL DO **NICELY!**

LATER THAT NIGHT, MORTON CROUCHED IN THE **HUSHES** OUTSIDE THE **WINKLESON MANSION**...

OLD PHINEAS ALWAYS TAKES HIS **CONSTITUTIONAL** BEFORE RETIRING! I'VE SEEN HIM SO **MANY** TIMES! ANYHOW HE COMES **NOW!**

OLD PHINEAS CERTAINLY WAS SURPRISED WHEN MORTY SPRANG FROM THE **SHUHST** WHY, YOU COULD HAVE KNOCKED HIM OVER WITH A **FEATHER**! MORTY USED THE **KNIFE**...

AAARRRRGGHHNN!

IN FACT HE USED IT A **GREAT DEAL!** HE PRACTICALLY **DEPACED** PHINEAS...

SORRY, MR. WINKLESON BUT I MUST MAKE **SURE** YOUR FAMILY REQUESTS A **CLOSED-COFFIN CEREMONY**.

WHEN MR. MACABBER LEFT MR. WINKLESON, THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT **THAT!** EVEN AN **EXPERT** UNDERTAKER **DON'T** STAND A CHANCE.

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

THE NEXT DAY, MORTON READ OF MR WINKLE-
BOTTOM'S UNTIMELY DECEASE IN THE NEWSPAPER!
THE OBITUARY COLUMN CARRIED THE INFORMATION
HE NEEDED.

HERE IT IS! 'SERVICES WILL BE HELD
AT THE SPOODS FUNERAL PARLOR AT
NOON TOMORROW'!



MORTON PROCEEDED WITH FURTHER ARRANGEMENTS.

I'LL PAY YOU FIFTY DOLLARS,
ANDS! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS STAY
OUTSIDE THE FUNERAL PARLOR.
FOLLOW THE PROCESSION, SEE
WHERE THEY BURY OLD PHYNEAS
AND COME AND SEE HOW UP.

DON' HON UP!
I DUNNO! FIFTY
DOLLARS, HUH?
THAT SURE IS A
LOT OF MONEY!



YOU DON'T HAVE
TO OPEN THE
COFFIN, ANDS!
JUST UNDOCK
IT!

GONNA ROB
THE GOLD
FROM HIS
TEETH, EH,
MR MACANBER?

NOTHING LIKE
THAT!

GRAY! GRAY!
DON'T GET SORE!



YOU WANT FILL
ME NOW, ANDS?

DON'T WORRY,
MR MACANBER!
I'LL DO IT!



LATE THAT NIGHT, MORTON Pried OPEN THE REAR
WINDOW OF THE SPOODS FUNERAL PARLOR.

THERE! THAT WAS
EASY!



AFTER SOME INVESTIGATING, MORTON FOUND OLD
PHYNEAS'S COFFIN.

AH! HERE YOU ARE, MR. WINKLEBOM! COME
NOW! I'M TAKING FOUR PLACES! YOU'LL NEVER
MISS ANYTHING (AND YOUR FUNERAL WILL MEAN
SO MUCH TO ME)



MORTON LIFTED MR WHOLESON'S BODY FROM THE CASKET AND CARRIED IT TO THE CELLAR...



BY THE TIME THEY DISCOVER YOUR BODY DOWN HERE IT WILL BE TOO LATE!

HIDING THE BODY CAREFULLY AMONGST THE CELLAR'S TRASH, MORTON RETURNED UPSTAIRS...



WHAT A BEAUTIFUL GOFFING SATIN-LINED! BRASS HANDLES!

MORTON CLIMBED INTO THE COFFIN AND CLOSED THE LID...



I'M FINALLY GOING TO KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO HAVE A LUXURIOUS FUNERAL...

MORTON LAY IN PHINEAS'S CASKET ALL THAT NIGHT AND THROUGH THE MORNING, DRINKING IN THE SOLEMNITY OF THE SITUATION! HE REVELED IN ITS PLUSH INTERIOR, LISTENING TO THE SOBBING AS THE MOURNERS BEGAN TO FILE IN TOWARDS NOON...



THEY'RE CRYING... FOR ME!

OUTSIDE THE FUNERAL PARLOR, AMOS WAITED IMPATIENTLY FOR THE SERVICES TO TAKE PLACE...



CRAZY OLD MACQUEEN! OH, WELL! FIFTY BUCKS IS FIFTY BUCKS!

INDEED MORTON LISTENED TO THE SCRATCHING ON THE COFFIN LID AS THE FLORAL WREATHS WERE PLACED UPON IT...



AH...WHAT EROTIC AROMAS! FLOWERS... FOR ME!

THE COFFIN WAS ROLLED INTO THE CHAPEL! MORTON LISTENED TO THE GLIDING WHEELS...THE ORGAN MUSIC...THE WHIMPERING MOURNERS...



THE SERVICES ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN! SERVICES... FOR ME!

SOON THE SOLEMN VOICE OF THE ORATOR WAS HEARD, FILLING THE CHAPEL! MORTON DROVE IN THE WORDS...THRILLED AT THE ROMANCE PAID TO THE DECEASED.

AND WHEN A MURDERER'S CRIME TOOK THIS BELOVED MAN FROM HIS DEVOTED FAMILY, IT TOOK FROM THEM GREAT JOY AND HAPPINESS...



THE FUNERAL BUDGY DROVE ON, EXTOLLING THE DECEASED PHINEAS WINKLESON. AND MORTON, GRIMING IN HIS COFFIN! AT LAST HE WAS EXPERIENCING THE DIGNITY AND ADORATION DROVE TO A DEPARTED! AT LAST HE WAS ENJOYING A FUNERAL FROM THE DEAD MAN'S POINT OF VIEW...

AND WITH THESE FINAL WORDS, THE SERVICES ARE AT AN END! THOSE WHO WISH TO...

MY! NOW I WILL BE CARRIED TO THE HEARSE! I WILL KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO BE LIFTED BY PALL-BEARERS...



MORTON LISTENED TO THE SHUFFLING OF FEET AS THE PALL-BEARERS MOVED TOWARD THE COFFIN.

THOSE WHO WISH TO LEAVE MAY DO SO AT THIS TIME!



MORTON DID NOT HEAR THE STRANGE REQUEST! HE WAS TOO ENTHRALLED WITH THE SPECTRE OF BEING BORN ALOFT BY MANY STRONG HANDS...

AND NOW, IN RESPECT TO THE DEPARTED ONE'S DESIRES AND INSTRUCTIONS, WE COMMIT HIS LAST REMAINS.



NOR DID MORTON REMEMBER HEARD THE DRAPES AT ONE END OF THE CHAPEL DRAW OPEN AND THE HUGE IRON DOOR SWING WIDE! ALL HE KNEW WAS HIS COFFIN WAS MOVING FORWARD WITH DIGNITY, WITH SOLEMNITY...

WE COMMIT HIS LAST REMAINS TO THE CONSUMING FIRES OF THE CREMATORY!



FREE, FREE! THAT'S A HOT ONE, EH, KIDDER? BY THE TIME MORTY-NOW REALIZED WHAT WAS HAPPENING, HE WAS PRETTY BURNED UP! THE ROARING FIRE AND 'SCORCHING' SONS OF REMORSE FROM THE MOURNERS CHOKED OUT HIS SCREAMS! SO MORTY YOUNG OUT WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO ENJOY ONE'S OWN FUNERAL! IT GAVE HIM A WARM FEELING...THROUGH AND THROUGH!

BY THE WAY! AND FINALLY GAVE UP WAITING FOR HIS FIFTY-BUCK DEAL AFTER A COUPLE OF HOURS! BUT THE RABBIT-KEEPER WON'T, SO I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO HER FOR HER TERROR TID-BIT! SEE YOU LATER!



-THE END-

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEY, HEN! A HORROR STORY SHE CALLS THAT I HAVE DRIVEN! BAW! FUNNY ANIMALS WOULD SOME BARKS MORE! I'LL TELL YOU A HORROR STORY! YES, IT'S THE VAULT-KEEPER, WELCOMING YOU ONCE MORE TO THE VAULT OF HORROR! COME IN! I FEEL REAL SHARP TODAY! I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT! I CALL THIS SPINE-TINGLING, BLOOD-CURLING, HAIR-STANDING...

FED UP!



THE CARNIVAL GROUNDS TEEMED WITH EXCITED THRILL-BREAKING CUSTOMERS! CALLOPE MUSIC FILLED THE SUNNY AIR! CHILDREN SCREAMED WITH JOY AS THE HUGE CARROUSEL WENT 'ROUND AND 'ROUND! LOUD-VOICED BARKERS MADE THEIR PITCHES BEFORE SEAS OF GULING FACES...



STEP RIGHT UP, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! SEE MARGARET'S CONJOURNMENT... THE GREATEST COLLECTION OF FREAKS AND RARE PERFORMERS TO EVER...

BUT OFF THE JAMMED DOOR, JUST BEYOND THE LAUGHTER AND NOISE, A MAN MOVED TOWARD A DILAPIDATED TRAILER! THE MAN WAS HUGE... OBES! HIS BREATHING WAS HEAVY AS HE LABORED UP THE TRAILER'S ROSTING STEPS...

ALEG? IS THAT FOOT?

GASP... YEAH, SANDRA! IT... GASP... IT'S ME! BRRRRP!



THE TRAILER DOOR SWUNG OPEN AND THE HULING FIGURE ENTERED! HE FLOPPED ONTO A WELL-WORN STUDIO-BED! THE WOMAN STOOD OVER HIM, TEARS IN HER EYES...

YOU... YOU FOOF IT, DIDNT YOU, ALEG? YOU TOOK THE MONEY TO SCIMPED AND PINCHED AND PUT AWAY SO WE COULD GET INTO THE BIG-TIME! YOU TOOK IT AND STUFFED YOURSELF!

I... I COULDN'T HELP IT, SANDRA! I... I WAS HUNGRY! I... I



THE FAT GUY'S VOICE FADED AS HE STAMMERED OUT ANOTHER OF HIS FEEBLE EXPLANATIONS! THE WOMAN WAGNT LISTENING! SHE'D HEARD THEM SO MANY TIMES BEFORE! HIS VOICE DROINED ON... AND ON... JUST LIKE 'THE GREAT GALASSO'S' VOICE HAD DONE TEN YEARS BEFORE... THE DAY SHE'D FIRST MET ALEG...

GALASSO'S INTRODUCTORY SPEECH ALWAYS BRASSED LIKE THAT! SANDRA USUALLY LOOKED AROUND AT THE CUSTOMERS WHILE HE MADE HIS PITCH! ALEG WAS IN THE CROWD, GRINNING UP AT HER! ONLY HE WASN'T FAT THEN! HE WAS RIX, BROAD-SHOULDERED, ALMOST HANDSOME...



AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! MAY I INTRODUCE MY PROTEGE... SANDRA! E... THE GREAT GALASSO... HAVE TAUGHT HER ALL SHE KNOWS! FOR TWO YEARS... EVERY DAY... I...

AND NOW... SANDRA! FOR HER FIRST FEAT, SHE WILL SWALLOW THE TWELVE INCH DARTER...



SANDRA'D COME THROUGH HER ACT AS USUAL! THE DARTER...

...THE RAPIER...

...AND THE 30 INCH SWORD...



AND THEN SHE'D STEPPED BEHIND THE BACKDROP TO LET GALAGO WIND UP THE PERFORMANCE WITH HIS FAMOUS NEON-SWORD-SWALLOWING FEAT...

WATCH, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, AS THE NEON SWORD PASSES DOWN... INTO MY STOMACH! YOU WILL SEE THE SHADOWS OF MY BIRD, MY HEART... EACH ORGAN OF MY BODY...

EXCUSE ME? PARDON ME, PLEASE.

GALAGO WAS BIG-TIME! HIS NEON-SWORD WAS FAMOUS! SANDRA WAS JUST A DECORATION FOR HIS ACT... A COME-ON FOR THE MALE-TRADE! ALSO CAME AROUND TO THE BACK AS SOON AS SANDRA'S GOTTEN OFF THE STAGEFLEDGED BALLED BOY ON THE NEON-ACT! SANDRA WAS QUITE FLATTERED...

YOU SAY YOU SAW MY PERFORMANCE? BUT YOU'RE MISSING THE BEST PART OF THE SHOW RIGHT NOW...

NO I'M NOT! THE BEST PART OF THE SHOW IS RIGHT HERE!



THAT WAS ALSO TEN YEARS AGO! A SWEET-TALKING FLATTERER! SANDRA FELL FOR HIS LINE... FELL HARD...

WHAT DO YOU NEED HIM FOR, SANDRA? YOU COULD BE A STAR BY YOURSELF!

I... I DON'T KNOW...

LISTEN! I COULD BE YOUR BARRER! WE'D GO FROM CARNIVAL TO CARNIVAL... NAU, IN THE DOUGH BY THE SACKFOLD! WHAT D'YA SAY?

DO YOU REALLY THINK I'M GOOD ENOUGH, ALBO?

GOOD ENOUGH! BART! YOU'LL BE BIG-TIME INSIDE OF A YEAR! JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE!

ALL RIGHT, ALBO! I'LL DO IT!



SO, SANDRA'D DUIT GALAGO AND BONE OUT ON HER OWN! SHE AND ALBO WORKED HARD GETTING STARTED! FINALLY THEY LANDED A SPOT WITH A TRAVELING ROAD-SHOW...

IT'S A START, BABY! THE DOUGH ISN'T MUCH BUT IT'S A START!

BUT, ALBO! WE COULDN'T BOTH LIVE ON THAT SALARY!

NOT SEPARATELY, MAYBE! BUT TOGETHER WE'D MANAGE! I... I MEAN IF WE WERE MARRIED... IT'D BE EASIER...

OH, ALBO! DO YOU MEAN IT? ARE YOU PROPOSING? DO YOU WANT TO MARRY ME?



SO ALEC AND SANDRA WERE SLICED, JER, SPICED! A YEAR WENT BY! MONEY WAS TIGHT! SANDRA WENT TO THE ROAD-SHOW MANAGER...

IT...IT'S JUST IMPOSSIBLE FOR ALEC AND I TO HAVE ON WHAT I'M EARNING! I THOUGHT... PERHAPS...

LOOK, SANDRA! SHOWD ENTHUSIASTERS LIKE YOU ARE A DIME & DODGE!

YOU DON'T DRAW IN ENOUGH CUSTOMERS TO DESERVE A RAISE! NOW, MAYBE IF YOU COULD THINK UP SOME *BIMMICK* TO *PULL 'EM IN*—Y'KNOW, SOME *EXTRA-SPECIAL ACT*...

I...I THINK I KNOW JUST WHAT YOU WANT, MR. MANAGER! I *THINK I KNOW!*



SANDRA WAS THINKING OF THE HIGH SWING! IT WAS JUST ABOUT THAT TIME THAT ALEC BEGAN TO *EAT!* AS IF THINGS WEREN'T HARD ENOUGH...

ALSO! YOU MEAN YOU SPENT ALL OF OUR FOOD ALLOWANCE ALREADY!

WELL... I... I HAD A *GOOD MEAL* TODAY!

A *GOOD MEAL!* I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

DON'T YOU? WELL, I WAS *SICK* AND TIRED OF EATING THE *SAME OLD SLOP* EVERY DAY, SO I WENT OUT AND HAD ME A *STEAK!* AND IT WAS *GOOD, TOO!*

OH, DARLING! I DON'T MEAN TO *NAB!* KNOW HOW IT IS? WE'LL... WE'LL MANAGE SOMEHOW! I'M *GLAD* YOU ENJOYED IT! YOU... YOU *DESERVED* IT!

I...I LOVE A *DECENT MEAL* *ONCE* IN A WHILE!



BUT ALEC'S 'DECENT MEALS ONCE IN A WHILE' CAME VERY OFTEN AFTER THAT! HE'D GO OUT AND ORDER A HUGE DINNER FOR HIMSELF, REGARDLESS OF COST...

...AND THE PHEASANT-UNDER-BLASS, LYONNAISE POTATOES, CAULIFLOWER, MIXED GREEN SALAD, RELISH DISH, DOUBLE CHEESE CAKE A LA MODE, AND HOT CHOCOLATE! OH...AND YOU BETTER BRING A *THICK STEAK!*

VERY WELL, M'DEAR! IS...IS *THIS*—YOU WILL PARDON ME, IS THIS ALL FOR YOU?



AND AS THE MONTHS FLEW BY, AND TWO...THREE YEARS PASSED, ALEC CONTINUED TO *GORGE* HIMSELF! HE GREW FATTER AND FATTER...

OH, ALEC! I'VE BEEN TRYING TO *SAVE* FOR THAT *MEAN-SWORD* FOR TWO YEARS NOW! I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO PUT AWAY A *DIME!*

A GUY'S GOTTA *EAT!* KIN I HELP IT IF I NEED *LOTS* A *FOOD?*



BUT SANDRA LOVED ALEC... SO SHE TOOK IT! YEAR AFTER YEAR HE'S STUFFED HIMSELF INTO OBESITY! AND YEAR AFTER YEAR SANDRAD TRIED TO SAVE...

IT MATTER, SANDRAD? YOU CRYIN'?

SOR... SOR... IT... IT'S NO USE! WE'LL NEVER GET ANYWHERE NOT THIS WAY!

DON' WORRY, SANDRAD! YOU'LL BE BIG-TIME YET! YOU WAIT AND SEE! JUN' WAIT AND... BURRRP!

OH, ALEX! YOU'RE... DISGUSTING!

HMM?

LOOK AT YOU! YOU EAT UP EVERY TIME WE GET TOGETHER! YOU'VE GROWN BIG AND FAT! EAT! EAT! EAT! THAT'S ALL YOU GOT EAT AND BELON!



SANDRAD! WHAT? BURRRP!

FOR EIGHT YEARS I'VE TRIED TO SAVE... TO BUY A NEON SWORD SO WE COULD GET INTO THE BIG-TIME! BUT I CAN'T SAVE A CENT! YOU SPEND IT ALL... STUFFING YOUR FACE!

AND THEN IT HAPPENED! THE ROAD-SHOW MANGER TOLD SANDRA ONE DAY...

I'M GIVING YOU A FEW EXTRA DOLLARS A WEEK, SANDRAD! PUT IT AWAY AND BUY THAT NEON-SWORD! YOUR ACT... COULD... USE... SOMETHING!

OH, THANK YOU, MR. MANGER! THANK YOU!



SANDRAD'S RESOLVED NOT TO TELL ALEC ABOUT THE EXTRA MONEY! EVERY WEEK SHE'S PUT IT AWAY BEFORE SHE GAVE ALEC THE PAY ENVELOPE...

SANDRAD? YOU IN THERE? TODAY'S PAY DAY! GOT IT?

Y-YES, ALEC! JUST A MOMENT!

LATER, SHE'S HIDE IT IN THE TRAILER IN A SAFE PLACE! AFTER ABOUT TWO YEARS OF THIS DECEPTION, SANDRAD'S SAVED UP ALMOST ENOUGH TO BUY THE NEON-SWORD...



YES, YES, 200! 200 DOLLARS! TWO MORE PAY-DAYS AND I'LL HAVE ENOUGH! THEN IT'S THE BIG-TIME FOR ALEC AND ME! AND HE CAN EAT TILL HE BURSTS!

BUT JUST THAT AFTERNOON, SANDRA'D RETURNED FROM HER PERFORMANCE IN THE AUDITORIUM TO FIND...

THE MONEY! IT'S... IT'S GONE! ALEC MUST HAVE FOUND IT!



SO SHE'D WAITED FOR HIM, BELIEVING ALEC'D SHE'D WAITED AND SOILED! AND FINALLY SHE'D HEARD HIS ELEPHANTINE FOOTSTEPS ON THE TRAILER STAIRS...

ALEC? IS THAT YOU?

GASP... FEAR, SANDRA? IT... GASP... IT'S ME! BRRRR!



NOW SHE WAS LISTENING TO HIS PEERIE EXPLANATIONS! HIS VOICE WAS DRODING ON AND ON...

ALL RIGHT, ALEC! ALL RIGHT! THAT'S ENOUGH!

I COULDN'T HELP IT, SANDRA! I...



LOOK, ALEC! I'VE BEEN THINKING! I HAVE A PLAN! A PLAN TO GET US INTO THE BIG-TIME!

YEARS! WHAT IS IT, SANDRA?



I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU TO BE A SWOOP-SWALLOWER TOO!

NO! OR NO! NO! NO! I COULDN'T...



YES YOU COULD! I'D TEACH YOU THE SECRET... HOW TO RELAX YOUR THROAT! YOU'D LIKE TO EAT STEAKS AND PHEASANTS EVERY DAY, WOULDN'T YOU?

YEARS! SOME? BUT...



IT'S EASY, ALEC! HERE! LET ME SHOW YOU! STAND OFF NOW LOOK UP... UP! FIERCE!

LIKE THIS...





PERFECT, ALEC!
NOW RELAX! HERE!
TAKE THE SWORD!
PASS IT DOWN
SLOWLY...
SLOWLY...

I-I
DON'T KNOW,
SANDRA! I



LITTLE BY LITTLE, SANDRA COAKED
ALEC, TEACHING HIM TO RELAX
ALEC'S THROAT, UNTIL THE SWORD WAS
DOWN.

THERE! DEEP!
THAT WAS EASY,
WASN'T IT?

OH, HEH...



SUDDENLY, SANDRA GRABBED ALEC'S
WRISTS AND TRUSTED HIS ARMS
BEHIND HIS BACK.

OH-N-N-N-NO!



SWIFTLY, SHE WRAPPED THE STRANDS OF ROPE AROUND
HIS WRISTS, SECURING THEM TIGHTLY.

THERE, ALEC! THERE!
NOW YOU CAN DO NOTHING!
NOTHING!

OH-N-N-N-NO-N-N!



SANDRA STARTED OUT THE DOOR OF THE TRAILOR!
ALEC STOOD, WIDE-EYED, HIS HANDS TIED BEHIND HIM,
THE SWORD-HANDLE STICKING OUT OF HIS MOUTH LIKE
SOME MISERABLE TONGUE.

I'M LEAVING NOW, ALEC! I'M
GOING TO LOOK YOU UP! THERE'S
A GOOD CROWD OUT THERE
TODAY! NO ONE WILL HEAR
YOU...

OH-N-N-N-NO!



SANDRA BLURPED OUT! ALEC LISTENED TO THE KEY
TURN IN THE LOCK! HE DAIED NOT MOVE! HE STOOD
FROD...LISTENING...AS SANDRA'S VOICE DRIFTED TO
HIM.

BE CAREFUL, ALEC! THE LEAST LITTLE
MOVEMENT MIGHT SEND THE SWORD BLADE
THROUGH YOUR CHEST! DON'T EVEN
BREATHE HARD! NO ABOVE ALL, DON'T
TRY NOT TO BELCH!



WHICH BRINGS UP AN IMPORTANT POINT, OH,
KIDDING? HEH, HEH! GET IT? WELL, ALEC WILL!
AFTER THE MEAL, HE JUST PUT AWAY BUT DEFI-
NITELY! SO ALEC FINALLY SWALLOWED A BIT MORE
THAN HE COULD CHEW! A REGULAR GUT-UP, THAT
BOY! WELL, HIS MOUTHINGS
FINALLY PENETRATED HIS
WIFE'S GOOD HEART!
NOW, HEH, HEH! NOW I'LL
TURN YOU BACK TO THE
OLD WITCH! WHE!
BURNING! WELL, EXCUSE
YOU! WHAT? IT WASN'T
YOUR OH, OH! THERE
GOES ALEC!

THE END

E.C. FANS!

YOU'VE WRITTEN!
YOU'VE TELEGRAPHED!
YOU'VE PHONED!
YOU'VE THREATENED US!

SO HERE IT IS! THE MAGAZINE
YOU'VE DEMANDED!



ANOTHER
"NEW TREND"
SURE-FIRE WINNER!



ON SALE NOW
AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!



Cautiously, looking up and down the gangway to make certain that no one was watching, Keller emerged from Fenton's stateroom. Pulling the knot toward him until he heard the lock click into place, Keller walked briskly away from the room which contained the corpse of the man he had just killed.

Fenton's own wristwatch would furnish the ironclad alibi he needed, Keller thought to himself. Resetting the hands of Fenton's purposely-smashed watch to indicate that the murder had occurred at exactly 2 o'clock, would make it appear physically impossible for Keller to have been the murderer. It was 1:45 now, he noted, glancing at his own wristwatch. By 2 he'd be in the company of witnesses who could be relied upon to swear that at the time of Fenton's death, they ... the crew of the ocean liner's lifeboat ... were busy rescuing Keller from the sea. For that was Keller's trump card; he was going to fall overboard "accidentally." Making certain, of course, that a witness was present on deck to see him hit the water. A witness was of the greatest necessity ... for without someone to see him fall and then raise the alarm, the ship might continue on its way, abandoning Keller to quick death in the shark-infested waters.

Up on deck, Keller noted with satisfaction, there was only one other person present at the moment: leaning against the handrail 15 yards away, was a bulky man in a red mackinaw. Keller coughed loudly ... the man turned at the sound and stared right

at him. Good, thought Keller, he's seen me! Now, as soon as he looks away, I go over the side! The moment he sees me hit the water he'll start screaming . . . the rescue lifeboat ought to be headed back for me within 5 minutes, unless the Captain was just letting out wind about the speed of his crew's rescue operations. They should pick me up by 2 o'clock. And then, any time after that . . . while they're still questioning me about how the accident happened . . . the steward bringing Fenton's lunch will discover his body. But that watch stopped at 2 . . . and my rescue at almost the same moment . . . is the kind of evidence no prosecutor will ever break down!

The moment to launch himself over the side of the ship had arrived, Keller realized. The would-be witness had turned away for a moment and was staring once again across the unrelieved vista of steel-grey water. Keller clambered quickly to the handrail and without a moment's hesitation threw himself far out, to make sure he cleared the side of the craft. In an incredibly short time he felt himself smash against the sea and become engulfed by water. Then, at last, his head bobbed clear of the waves. The boat was steaming on past him. But the witness, Keller noted with glee, was staring right at him. In another moment the man would give the alarm . . .

It was 10 minutes later . . . 10 minutes in which the ship's speed had continued unabated . . . that a young man in a junior officer's coat stepped out on deck and moved toward the bulky man in the red mackinaw.

"Time for your nap, sir," the officer said softly, taking the bulky man's arm. Then, carefully, he led the blind passenger in the red mackinaw to the doors which led to the first-class staterooms.



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THE OLD WITCH'S NICHE

Hee, hee! It seems that I live, a culture-loving reader-ship! Since I published a poem sent me by the boys in Peter Hill Cemetery, other critics offerings along the same dierd lines have poured in. And lo and behold, I've been entertaining you with tarred-moose-moose from my harried-ha-parade, many mad-mad-lovers have sent me scolding-requests! Billy Barnett of Brooklyn, N. Y., Arnold Pickett of Tacoma, Wash., and Gertrude Ashby of Denver, Colo., requested the following ribbeting ribbeting.

RANGES FOR THE MEMORY
GMOIL OF MY DREAMS
ODOR SORRY NOW?
YOU'RE THE SCREAM IN MY COFFIN
MY MUMMY DONE TORE ME
ELINE ON MY HANDS
MY ADORSE MAUSOLEUM
SUMMER CRIME
THE LITTLE WHITE SHROUD THAT DIED
POLLUTED WATERS
MY BOO HEAVEN
MY BODY LIES FULL ON A POTION
OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MOURNING

Of course, there were many others - but they were too ghastly to publish! As far as the poetry goes, a gentleman who signs himself Edgar Allen Poe (actually Bob Brothers of Gonzales, Texas) sends in this gem of American literature:

I had a little vampire friend,
Her teeth were white as snow,
And everywhere the vampires were
She's wanted me to go!
She took me to a grave one night
To visit with a ghoul;
It made me lose my appetite
To see those creatures drool!

Janice Lopez of Ft. Walton, Florida sends in TWO poems! Isn't SHE the busy little bee?

Three hungry ghosts
Three hungry ghosts
See how they dance
See how they dance!
They all ran after the merchant's wife
And let her throat with a curious knife
Did you ever see such a sight in your life
At three hungry ghosts?

Janice's second offering is shorter but more so the point!

The spring has sprung
The grass has turned
I wonder where
The bodies lie!

Stanley Sherman and Len Minton of N. Y. C. send in the following elegy to your three Ghoul-Lovers...

The Crypt-Keeper and Old Witch were walking one day

"When they met the Vault-Keeper, while on their way,
"Rise," said the Old Witch, "We're working too hard."

"Let's take a stroll on the pretty graveyard!"
They were entering the blood from each other's throat
When a vampire had dropped them a note:
"Don't linger in the graveyard, you ugly old women!
Or we'll punch you off and we'll put on the bones!"
So they ran toward the gate, the love like thieves
When Le and Bebold - they met Graham Ingold
"Good evening, friend, how's it go?" he quickly said -
While he carefully put on his more than head.

"Lead on," said the Crypt-Keeper, pointing down low
For Ingold was slowly decaying his toe!
"You'll poison yourself," the Old Witch did cry -
"You'll find the food that they feed me, a termite would die!"

Then they all shook hands and became good friends
And that is how our story ends!

Grace Fagin of Philadelphia, Pa. completed a song started by the Vault-Keeper (to the tune of the Anniversary Waltz).

Oh how we danced on the night you were died
I looked at your face and then tapped off your head!
The night was all grey as the ghosts had away
The vampires returned to their graves before day
Now that I have you so terribly hated
Your presence have stopped, for your blood I have drained,
My lungs hit deep and I drank my fill
My darling I love you still!

And now, before I close this classy conclave, just a reminder! Pictures are still available - nobody buys them so actually they're still available! hee, hee! The girls for you (and who would want them?) the set of 3 by 7 autographed photographer reproductions (this means they ain't hand-drawn but actual!) of the three Ghoul-Lovers - me and the other two crumb! And while we're asking money, for 75c you can get a subscription to my mad-mag (or any other E.C. mad-mag for that matter!)! Just send the moola along with your worst enemy's clearly printed name and address, and we'll mail him the next six maddening issues - a full year's disgusting supply! Send picture orders, money, subscription orders, money, poetry, money, drawings, money, fun mail, and/or money to:

The Old Witch
Room 706, Dept. 13
233 Lafayette Street
N.Y.C. 12 N.Y.



HERE'S A CHILLING LITTLE
YARN ... UP TO A POINT ...

MINOR ERROR!



THE OLD HOUSE HAD STOOD EMPTY FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS BEFORE SOMEONE BOUGHT IT! THE KIDS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAD HEARD THAT A MAN AND A BOY HAD MOVED IN! BUT FOR NEARLY THREE MONTHS AFTER THE MOVING-MAN HAD UNLOADED THE FURNITURE, NO ONE HAD SEEN THE 'BOUNSTERS! ONE SUMMER EVENING.

HEY! IT'S GETTIN
DARK! LET'S PLAY
HIDE 'N SEEK!

YEAH! GOOD
IDEA! NOW
'BOUT...

LOOK! LOOK!
THE OLD HOUSE!
THERE'S A FACE
IN THE WINDOW!



THE ASHEN COUNTERPANE OF A TWELVE YEAR
OLD BOY PEERED OUT AT THE GATHERED KIDS
BELOW.

HEY! THAT MUST BE THE
NEW KID THAT MOVED
IN!

GOSH, HE
LOOKS
SCARY!

HEY!
CHECK OUT
HIS!



THE CHILD'S WIDE-EYED, PALE FACE
DISAPPEARED FROM THE WINDOW.

HE'S
GONE!

HE LOOKED
SCARED
STUFF!

LOOK!
THE
FRONT
DOOR.



THE FRONT DOOR TO THE OLD
HOUSE OPENED AND A MAN CAME
OUT! HE CARRIED A LARGE CAR-
TON TIED WITH STRINGS.

IT'S THE OLD
BOY! WHAT BOUGHT
THE HOUSE!

SEE!
DON'T
HE LOOK
MEAN?



THE MAN'S FACE WAS A RUDE MASK
SET WITH A GRUEL EXPRESSION!
HE STARTED DOWN THE STREET.

LET'S ASK
HIM WHY THE
KID CAN'T
COME OUT AN'
PLAY!

YOU
ASK 'EM!
NOT
ME!

C'MON!
DON'T BE A
SCARED-
CAT! I'LL
ASK 'EM
MYSELF!



THE HARD-FACED MAN TURNED AS THE KIDS TROTTED
UP TO HIM.

FEAR?
WHAT D'YEH
WANT?

SAY, MISTER! WHY CAN'T YOUR
LIL' BOY COME OUT AN' PLAY' WITH
US? WE AIN'T EVER MET 'IM
AN' IT'S BEEN ALMOST THREE
MONTHS SINCE YOU.



THE MAN'S FACE GREW PURPLE WITH RAGE! HIS LIPS
DREW BACK IN A SNARL, EXPOSING SHARP LITTLE DIS-
COLORED TEETH.

G'WAN! SCRAM! MIND
YOUR OWN BUSINESS!
KIDNA AIN'T NEVER COM-
ING OUT! NEVER, Y'HEAR?
HEAR? AND DON'T YOU
HANG AROUND THE HOUSE!
I DON'T LIKE PRYIN'!

SEE? I SURE.
MISTER! WE
D. DIDN'T MEAN
NO HARM! WE
WUZ J. JUST
ASKIN'!



THE MAN STAMPED OFF ANGRILY.

THE
OLD
GRAB!

GOLLY! I'D HATE
TO HAVE HIM AS
MY OLD MAN!

I SEEN HIM COME
OUT EVERY NIGHT
AT THIS TIME!
MORNA SAYS HE
WORKS AT
NIGHT!



WHAT'S HE
GOT IN THE
BOX?

I DUNNO!
HE NEVER
CLAIRED IT
BEFORE!

C'MON! LET'S
PLAY HERE 'N
SEEN! IT'S
GETTIN' LATE!



THE NEXT DAY THE NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS WERE ALL EXCITED ABOUT THE MURDER THE PREVIOUS NIGHT...

IT SAYS 'THE MURDERED MAN'S BODY WAS COMPLETELY DRAINED OF ITS BLOOD!'

WAMPYUS?

AMSHUDUR! THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING!

OH, NOT I READ IN A COMIC BOOK ONCE... I THINK IT WAS CALLED FIVE HAVIN' ON...

LISTEN TO THIS! A CARTON WAS FOUND AT THE SCENE! IT'S THE POLICE'S ONLY CLUE!

A CARTON, SEE... LAST NIGHT...



AM, DON'T GO PLAIN DETECTIVE?

WELL, HE WAS CARRYIN' A CARTON!

SO WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

LATER THAT AFTERNOON...

WHAT'LL WE DO 'BOUT SEEN' IF WE CANGET TO TALK TO THAT NEW KID?

HOW 'BOUT SEEN' IF WE CANGET TO TALK TO THAT NEW KID?

NOT ME, BOY! HIS OLD MAN LOOKS AWFUL MEAN!

AM, O'WON! THE BOAR PLUS WORKS AT NIGHT! WE'LL WAIT UNTIL HE LEAVES!



TOMORROW EVENING...

THERE HE GOES! HE'S GOT A CARTON AGAIN!

WE'LL WAIT TILL HE TURNS THE CORNER!

POOR KID! HE NEVER GETS OUT...

FINALLY THE NEW ARRIVAL IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD DISAPPEARED AROUND THE CORNER AND WAS GONE! THE KIDS RUSHED ACROSS THE STREET...

HEY, KID! HEY, KID!

G'WON OUT!





THE NEXT DAY, THE KIDS READ ABOUT THE SECOND STRANGE KILLING...

WHAT'LL WE DO IF WE TELL THE COPS EZRA'S UNCLE IS A VAMPIRE...

WE'RE NOT SURE YET! WE'VE GOT TO BE SURE!

THAT NIGHT, THE KIDS CROUCHED BEHIND THE BURNES OPPOSITE EZRA'S HOUSE...

JUST LIKE THE FIRST ONE! BLOOD ORAINED AN' ALL!

AN' THEY FOUND ANOTHER EMPTY CARTON!



HERE HE COMES! HE'S CARRYIN' A CARTON AGAIN!

SH-HH! WE'LL FOLLOW HIM! BUT STAY OUT OF SIGHT!



DUCKING BEHIND FENCES, LAMP-POSTS, TREES, AND ANY OTHER HIDING PLACE, THE KIDS FOLLOWED EZRA'S UNCLE...

HE'S HITTIN' HIM ON THE HEAD!

I'M GETTIN' OUT OF HERE!

HE'S TAKIN' SOMETHIN' OUT OF THE CARTON!

IT... IT'S A BALLON JOE!

HE'S STOPPING! SOMEONE'S COMIN' THE OTHER WAY!



NOPE! NOW HE'S DRAININ' THE BLOOD INTO THE JOE!

I FEEL SICK! O-M-G! WE'VE SEEN ENOUGH!

NO WONDER HE KEEPS EZRA LOCKED UP! HE'S AFRAID EZRA'LL TALK!

WE GOTTA DO SOMETHIN'!

THE COPS'LL NEVER BELIEVE EZRA'S UNCLE IS A VAMPIRE!

THEN WE'VE GOT TO DESTROY HIM OURSELVES! VAMPIRES SLEEP DURING THE DAY! NOW... HERE'S WHAT WE'LL DO...



THE NEXT DAY, THE KIDS CLIMBED THROUGH A WINDOW OF EZRA'S HOUSE ARMED WITH A HAMMER AND A SHARPENED WOODEN STAKE...



THERE HE IS! ASLEEP!
JUST LIKE I SAID!

PUT THE STAKE OVER HIS CHEST!
HURRY!



CRAT! SLAM IT!
SLAM IT HARD!

QUICK!

HERE BOYS!

A SHRIEK OF PAIN ECHOED THROUGH THE HOUSE AS THE HAMMER FELL UPON THE STAKE AGAIN AND AGAIN...



HE... HE'S...
BASP... HE'S DEAD!

HE... HE'S SUPPOSED TO FALL INTO DUST!

AM... YOU AN' YOUR COMIC BOOKS!

G'MON! LET'S GO FIND EZRA!



THE KIDS SEARCHED THE HOUSE... BUT NO SIGN OF EZRA! SUDDENLY...

HEY! DOWN HERE... G'MON! IN THE CELLAR!

OH, GOLLY!!



THE OTHER TWO BOYS RUSHED TO THE CELLAR! THE ONE WHO'D CALLED STOOD BEFORE THE OPEN COFFIN, STARING WITH WIDE FRIGHTENED EYES! EZRA SLEPT SERENELY! HIS BLOOD-STAINED LIPS WERE CURLED IN A SLIGHT SMILE! THE EMPTY BALCONY HUR STOOD ON THE FLOOR BESIDE HIS COFFIN.



H-HE... HE'S ASLEEP!

H-HE'S THE VAMPIRE!

H-HE... HE MADE A MISTAKE!

YOU SURE DID, KIDDO! BUT THAT'S BE-
CAUSE YOU DIDN'T READ MY COMIC BOOK
CAREFULLY! VAMPIRES SLEEP IN
COFFINS, NOT BEDS! AND THEY DRINK
BLOOD. THEY DON'T COLLECT IT! YEP!
LIL' EZRA WAS THE VAMPIRE! DAD WAS
HIS MOMMY AND DADDY! UNCLE WAS
JUST TAKING CARE OF HIM BECAUSE
HE LOVED THE CHILD OF COURSE, THAT
MEANT GETTING BLOOD FOR THE THIRSTY

LIL' 'ZRA! AT LEAST
TILL HE WAS OLD
ENOUGH TO GO OUT
AND GET HIS OWN!
AND IF YOU'D LIKE
TO GET YOUR OWN...
PICTURE OF ME, THAT
IS... READ MY COLUMN,
THE OLD WITCH'S
NITCHE! 'BYE, NOW!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEY, HEY! YEP, IT'S ME AGAIN! YOUR HOST IN THE CRYPT OF TERROR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER! COME IN! COME IN! BUT WATCH YOUR STEP! AH... STEPPES! BAY! THERE'S A NICE LOCATION FOR A HORROR STORY! THE FROZEN, SNOW-COVERED STEPPES OF OLD IMPERIAL RUSSIA... B.S.! (BEFORE BEALIN!) AND I HAVE JUST THE BARN! IT'S BOUND TO MAKE YOU HOWL FOR JOY! I CALL THIS TERRORIFYING TALE OF TUNDRA-TERRORS...

WOLF BAIT!



DESPITE THE BITING WINTER WIND THAT SWEEPS ACROSS THE TREELSS RUSSIAN TUNDRA, THE HORSE'S MINNEY COAT IS BATHED IN PERSPIRATION! THE PANTING ANIMAL STRUGLES AT THE SLEIGH-HARNERS... GALLOWING FAINTLY ACROSS THE TREELSS SNOW-COVERED WASTELAND.

FASTER... FASTER! THEY'RE CATCHING UP TO US!

THE HORSE CANNOT GO ANY FASTER! THE SLEIGH IS TOO NEARBY!



FOR THIS IS RUSSIA AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY WHEN SLEIGHS ARE THE ONLY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION ACROSS THE STEPPES OR NORTHERN PLAINS, AND STARVING WOLVES HUNT IN PACKS! EVEN NOW, THE YELING, HOWLING GREY SHADOWS LEAP ACROSS THE GLISTENING WHITE AFTER THE SPEEDING SLEIGH.



THEY ARE GAINING ON US!

I HAVE ONLY TWO MORE BULLETS! HOW MUCH LONGER IS IT, IVAN?

THE FOR-CLAD DRIVER OF THE SLEIGH SCREAMS INTO THE HOWLING WIND.



FIFTEEN MILES! SHOOT, STOP THEM FOR A WHILE! OUR HORSE WILL COLLAPSE AT THIS SPEED!

WAIT! YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS, NETZKA! WAIT UNTIL ONE GETS CLOSER!

THE YOUNG OFFICER CALLED NETZKA SIGHTS DOWN THE BARREL OF HIS RIFLE AT THE HOWLING, HOWLING WOLVES CLOSING IN BEHIND THE SLEIGH.



JUST A LITTLE CLOSER! JUST A LITTLE.

THE STARVING ANIMALS, DRAGNED WITH THE GRAWING PANGS OF HUNGER, THEIR EYES BURNING LIKE WHITE-HOT COALS, LEAP UP ABOUT THE SLEIGH, THEIR FANGS SLASHING, THEIR SPITTLE SPLATTERING.



NOW, NETZKA! NOW.

THE YOUNG OFFICER'S AIM IS TRUE! A WOLF FALLS, SHATTERING IN THE SNOW! THE WHITE AROUND IT GOES CRIMSON.



GOOD SHOT! GOOD SHOT!

THE SCENT OF BLOOD DRAWS THE REST OF THE PACK FROM THE SLEIGH AND THEY SPRING UPON THEIR FALLEN COMPANION. HEFFING, TEARING, DEVOURING.



THE FRIGHTENED PASSENGERS IN THE SLEIGH WATCH THE GORY SIGHT FACING IN THE DISTANCE.



SOON THEY WILL BE UPON US AGAIN! ONCE THEY HAVE STAMPED THE WOLF'S FLESH FROM ITS BONES!

HOW FAR AWAY! I HAVE BUT ONE SHELL LEFT!

THIRTEEN! FOURTEEN! WE WILL BE LUCKY IF WE MAKE IT!

THE WOMAN BEGINS TO SOB! SHE SHOWS HER INFANT CHILD CLOSER TEARS FILLING HER EYES...

DO NOT GRY, VANYA! IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT! WE WILL GET THROUGH!

WE MUST... WE MUST BE THROUGH!



VANYA LOOKS UP AND SMILES SAGELY...

MY HUSBAND IS WAITING FOR ME! HE HAS NOT EVEN SEEN OUR BABY! HE HAS FOUND A PLACE FOR US TO LIVE! I... I MUST GET THROUGH...



THE WOMAN NAMED VANYA CLOSES HER EYES! HER THOUGHTS GO BACK... BACK TO THAT TIME SO LONG AGO WHEN SHE'D SAID GOOD-BYE TO HER HUSBAND...

THIS IS THE CHANCE I HAVE WAITED FOR, MY DARLING!

BUT, THE BABY...



YOU WILL HAVE YOUR BARK, VANYA! THEN YOU WILL COME TO ME! I WILL FIND A PLACE FOR US TO STAY! DO NOT WORRY! THINGS WILL BE GOOD WITH US FROM NOW ON!

IF YOU MUST GO, THEN GO, MY DEAR ONE! WE WILL COME TO YOU! I... AND OUR CHILD!



THE SLUSH CONTINUES ON ACROSS THE FROZEN TUNDRA! BEHIND, THE HOWLING GROWS LOUDER ONCE MORE! THE WOLF-PACK HAS FINISHED DEVOURING THE FALLEN MEMBER AND IS OVERTAKING IT AGAIN...

HOW FAR NOW, INANT?

TWELVE MILES! BE CAREFUL! DO NOT WASTE YOUR LAST SHOT, NETZKA!



THE YOUNG OFFICER RAISES HIS RIFLE ONCE MORE! HE SMILES AT THE CRIDER...

I WILL BE CAREFUL, WAN! I WANT TO GET THROUGH AS MUCH AS ANYONE! MY BRIDE-TO-BE WANTS ME! MY AIM WILL BE TRUE!

YOU ARE TO BE MARRIED, NETZKA! CONGRATULATIONS!



THE WOLVES ARE UPON THEM ONCE AGAIN! THEIR CHIEL-LOOKING TEETH FLASH BENEATH CHAWN-BACK LIPS! THEIR INFURIED EYES ARE LIKE BALLS OF FIRE! NETZKA'S FINGER CLOSSES AGAINST THE RIFLE-TRIGGER...

BLANG!

YOU HIT ONE, NETZKA! YOU HIT ONE!



ONCE AGAIN, THE WOLVES FALL UPON THEIR YOUNGER COMPANION, ABANDONING THE FLEEING SLUSH...



WE WILL BE ALL RIGHT FOR ANOTHER MILE OR SO NOW, EH, NETZKA?

BUT THE TOWN OFFICER DOES NOT HEAR! HIS THOUGHTS ARE FAR AWAY FROM THE STEPPES AND THE SPEEDING SLUSH! HIS THOUGHTS ARE OF SONIA, HIS BRIDE-TO-BE! HE IS REMEMBERING THE DAY HE PROPOSED...



IN JANUARY, I WILL HAVE MY LEAVE, SONIA! TWO WHOLE WEEKS! WE WILL BE MARRIED THEN!

OH, YES, NETZKA! I WILL SCORRY THE DAYS TILL YOU COME, MY DARLING!

THE OLD MAN RESIDE NETZKA THIS AT HIS TUNG, SHOCKING HIM OUT OF HIS THOUGHTS...



WHAT, WHAT WILL WE DO NOW, SOLDIER? YOUR BULLETS ARE USED UP!

THAT IS JOGINS' OLD ONE! PERHAPS THEY WILL NOT COME AFTER US AGAIN!

NO! THEY WILL COME BACK! THEY WILL FOLLOW US ALL THE WAY! PACKED LIKE THAT ARE NEVER SLEEPING! THEIR HUNGER KNOWS NO BOUNDS!



THEN WE WILL HAVE TO FIGHT THEM OFF WITH OUR BARE HANDS!

I I HAVE A BETTER WAY, SOLDIER! HERE IN THIS PACKAGE!

WHAT IS IT, OLD ONE!



I... GO TO LIVE WITH MY DAUGHTER! SHE IS RECENTLY WIDOWED! SHE IS VERY POOR! SHE AND HER THREE CHILDREN ARE STARVING! I - I BRING THEM MEAT!

YOU HAVE MEAT IN THAT PACKAGE?



YES! IF I GIVE IT TO YOU DO YOU THINK IT WOULD HELP?

OF COURSE IT WILL, OLD ONE! OF COURSE! WE WILL THROW IT TO THEM WHEN THEY OVERTAKE US AGAIN! IT WILL STALL THEM A LITTLE LONGER!



ONCE AGAIN, THE BATING GREY SHADOWS LEAP ACROSS THE GLISTERING SNOW AFTER THE SLEIGH...



HOW FAR NOW, VANYA?

NINE MILES, NETZKA!
ONLY NINE MILES!

SOON THE BLOOD-THIRSTY ANIMALS ARE LEAPING ABOUT THE SLEIGH ONCE MORE, SNAPPING AT THE HORSE'S HOOFES, CLAWING AT THE SLEIGH-SIDES...



THE MEAT! THROW THE MEAT!

THE MEAT IS HURLED INTO THE SNOW BEHIND THE SPEEDING SLEIGH! THE WOLVES TURN UPON IT SAVAGELY, FIGHTING FOR IT! THE OLD MAN WATCHES THE MELÉE WITH TEARS IN HIS EYES...



I... I HAVE A LITTLE MONEY? I COULDN'T BUY MORE FOR ANNA... IF... IF I GET THROWN!

SEVEN MILES MORE! ONLY SEVEN!

THE WOMAN WITH THE CHILD TURNS TO FEAR, THE DRIVER...



WHY DO YOU DO THIS, VANYA? WHY DO YOU TAKE SUCH A CHANCE?

I, TOO, HAVE AN INFANT CHILD AT HOME, VANYA! AN INFANT NEEDS MILK!



BUT WE PAY YOU SO LITTLE!

IT IS ENOUGH FOR OLGA AND THE BABY! PERHAPS I WILL CHANGE MINDS NEXT TIME... IF THERE IS A NEXT TIME!



THE TOWN OFFICER POINTS OFF TOWARDS THE HORIZON...

THERE IT IS! THERE IS THE TOWN! ONLY FIVE MILES AWAY!



SUDDENLY VANYA SCREAMS...

LOOK! THE WOLVES! THEY'RE COMING AGAIN!

WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT! WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT!

THE SLOTHFURN, YELFING GRAY SHADOWS STREAK ACROSS THE SNOW AFTER THE SLEIGH! THE DROG, SPILLS FROM THEIR FANGED JAWS! THEY JOSTLE AND SHOVE EACH OTHER, TRYING TO BE THE FIRST TO REACH THEIR QUARRY.



FEAR AND TERROR CLUTCH AT THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE IN THE SLEIGH.

THINK OF SOMETHING!
THINK OF SOMETHING!
ANYTHING!



BUT EVEN THE DRIVER IS NOT THINKING OF A WAY TO STALL THE WOLVES! HE IS THINKING OF OLGA AND THE BABY, AT HOME WITH NO MILK.



...AND THE OLD ONE IS THINKING OF HIS STARVING WIDOW DAUGHTER WITH THE THREE UNDERNOURISHED CHILDREN.



VARRA IS THINKING OF HER HUSBAND WAITING FOR THEM, WAITING FOR THE CHILD HE HAS NEVER EVEN SEEN.



...AND METZKA, TOO, WHEN HE TRIES TO THINK, SEES ONLY SONJA, HIS BRIDE-TO-BE.



BUT THE WOLVES ARE THINKING ONLY OF HOT BLOOD AND FRESH WARM MEAT, AND THEY HOWL AS THEY HEAR THE SLEIGH.



THE SHARING, SHAPPING SPRY-DEATHS LEAP UP AROUND THE SLEIGH! ONE OF THEM GASHES THE YOUNG OFFICER'S FACE...



THE DRIVER'S FACE IS WHITE, HIS EYES WIDE WITH TERROR AS HE SCREAMS OUT HIS PLAN.

THE MEAT STOPPED THEM! ONE OF US COULD STOP THEM! IT'S ONLY A FEW MILES MORE! ONE OF US COULD SAVE THE OTHERS!



ONE OF THE WOLVES LINGS IN THE SLEIGH BUT A ROCK SENDS HIM OFF! THE HORSE SHRIERS IN PAIN...

IF THEY STOP THE HORSE, WE'LL ALL BE FINISHED! ONE OF US... A SACRIFICE IS THE ONLY WAY!



HE'S RIGHT! IT'S ONE... OR ALL!

WHO? WHO WILL GO?



IT TAKES ONLY A SPLIT SECOND TO MAKE THE DECISION! THE PEOPLE IN THE SLEIGH, LIKE THE ANIMALS OUTSIDE, SPRING UPON THEIR VICTIM. LIFT THE FIGURE... AND TOSS IT TO THE HOWLING SHADOWS...



AND WHILE THE PACK RIPS AND TEARS AT THE SACRIFICE ONE, THE SLEIGH SPEEDS ON TOWARD THE TOWN... AND SAFETY...



HEH, HEH! YES! THAT'S MY STORY, KIDDIES! THE BEST! GOT THROUGH ALL RIGHT BUT... HUH? WHO DID THEY TOSS OVERBOARD? WELL, I'LL TELL YOU! WHEN I GOT THERE, THERE WASN'T ENOUGH LEFT TO TELL WHO IT WAS! ER... WHO DO YOU THINK? HEH, HEH! YES! YOU'RE RIGHT! WELL, WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAGAZINE FROM THE GRYPF, WITH MORE GRYF-TALES! BYE, NOW!



FEAR

HERE ARE TALES THAT WILL USHER YOU INTO

THE HAUNT OF



NO. 14
AUG.

LN 10



10¢

FEAR

FEATURING...



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



CHASITY

**HEE, HEE! E.C.'S SCIENCE-FICTION
MAGS MUST BE PRETTY FIENDISH
TO GIVE THESE TWO GHOULS
A CHARGE! LOOK AT 'EM!**



**E.C. IS
PROUDEST
OF ITS TWO
SCIENCE-FICTION
MAGAZINES!**



Issue of Four, July-Aug., 1958—Vol. 1, No. 34. Published bi-monthly by Fiction Publishing Co., Inc., at 255 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y. William J. Galton, Managing Editor; Albert S. Fishkin, Editor. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. One year subscription in the U. S. one plus the postage—total Two—anywhere \$1.00. Entire contents copyrighted 1952 by Fiction Publishing Co., Inc. Printed in the U. S. A. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped return envelope. No similarity between any of the characters, names or persons appearing in this magazine with any of those living or dead is intended, and any such similarity is purely coincidental.

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEY, HEY! DRAG YOUR PALPITATING CORPSES INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, KIDDIES! YEP, IT'S YOUR HOSTESS IN HYSTERICS, THE OLD WITCH, READY TO BUSTLE UP ANOTHER REVOLTING RECIPE IN MY REERING CAULDRON! SMELL IT? IT'S A SPECIAL BREW THIS TIME...EXTRA SPECIAL! READY? GOT YOUR DRINKIE-CUPS FASTENED? GOT YOUR SHROUGS TUCKED UNDER YOUR CHIN? GOOD? THEN I'LL SERVE THE GLOBBERING STUFF I CALL...

A LITTLE STRANGER!



FOR A MOMENT, THERE IS A DEAD SILENCE! THE FLICKERING LIGHT OF THEIR TORCHES CASTS AN EERIE GLOW OVER THE BODY SPRAWLED BEFORE THEM! THEY STARE WITH HORRIFIED FACES AT THE CORPSE! ONE OF THE MEN STOOFS AND POINTS...

"LOOK! ON HIS NECK!
TWO PUNCTURES...
THE MARK OF
A VAMPIRE!"

"IMPOSSIBLE!
THE BODY HAS
BEEN PARTIALLY
DEVoured!" I
TELL YOU IT IS THE
WORK OF A
WEREWOLF!"



AN OLDER MAN SHAKES HIS HEAD

NO, PETER! YOU ARE
WRONG! THE
BLOOD HAS BEEN
DRAINED FROM
THE BODY! IT IS
A VAMPIRE!

BUT A
VAMPIRE
DOES NOT
FEAST UPON
THE FLESH,
VICTOR!

HE IS RIGHT,
VICTOR! A WERE-
WOLF FEASTS
UPON THE FLESH!

THEN EXPLAIN
TO ME, IF
YOU CAN,
THE HOLES
IN THE
NECK!

MMMM! A
WEREWOLF
WOULD NOT DO
THAT! UNLESS
UNLESS...

GASP! UNLESS
HE WAS
KILLED BY
BOTH!



BOTH?
YOU MEAN...

A VAMPIRE ... AND A
WEREWOLF ... STALKING THE
COUNTRYSIDE ... TOGETHER!



MANY MILES FROM THE HORRIFIED GROUP OF
VILLAGERS, HIGH IN THE BAVARIAN ALPS THAT
TOWER ABOVE THEIR HEADS, IN A CAVE LONG SINCE
FORGOTTEN BY THOSE WHO SUDE MOUNTAIN-
CLIMBERS, A ROMANTIC SCENE IS TAKING PLACE...

TO YOU, MY DEAR!
TONIGHT ... YOU WERE
DIVINE!

AND TO YOU, MY LOVE!
TONIGHT WAS ANOTHER
TRIUMPH!



BUT AS WE DRAW CLOSE TO THE LOVING COUPLE, WE
NOTICE SOMETHING STRANGE! SOMETHING TERRI-
FYING! THE WOMAN, ALTHOUGH VERY BEAUTIFUL,
HAS SHARP LITTLE FANGS! FOR SHE ... IS A
VAMPIRE...

PERHAPS WE WILL STAY HERE
FOR A WHILE, MY SWEET! I AM
SO TIRED OF WANDERING!

PERHAPS!



...AND THE MAN'S EARS ARE POINTED ... HIS FACE IS
COVERED WITH HAIR ... HIS EYES GLEAM YELLOW IN
THE CANDLELIGHT! FOR THE MAN ... IS A WEREWOLF.

WHA? WAITS IF WE LOOK
HARD - WE WILL FIND SOMETHING
ONE HERE WHO WILL
MARRY US?

WE WILL SEE.
MY DEAR! COME!
IT IS ALMOST
DARK!



THE COUPLE RISE AND STROLL AROUND AND AROUND, DREAMING INTO THE SAVED ROOM. THEY COME UPON A SIMPLE PINE COFFIN, LYING IN THE SHADOWS...

GOOD MORNING, MY DARLING! UNTIL NEXT MONTH, WHEN AGAIN THE MOON IS FULL!

GOOD MORNING, MY DEAREST!

THE WOMAN GLIDES INTO THE COFFIN AND LIES DOWN! SOON, HER EYELIDS CLOSE! AS THE CROW OF A ROOSTER DRIFTS UP FROM THE VALLEY BELOW, SHE FALLS ASLEEP...

TILL NEXT MORNTH, MY DEAREST!

THE MAN SIGNS AND CLOSSES THE COFFIN LID! THEN HE TURNS TOWARD THE CAVE OPENING WHERE THE FIRST SWEET STREAKS OF DAWN FILTER THROUGH THE OVER-SNOWED ENTRANCE! HIS YELLOW EYES GLOW DARK...

...THE HAIR ON HIS FACE RECOILS! HIS POINTED EARS ROUND OFF! THE SHARP CLAWS OF HIS FINGERS SHORTEN...

...AND ONCE AGAIN, HE TAKES ON HUMAN FORM... THE FORM OF A SEEDY MOUNTAIN HERMIT!

FAR BELOW, THE MEN ARE JUST RETURNING WITH THE CORPSE OF THEIR FELLOW VILLAGER...

HE HAS BEEN THE WORK OF MURDERED? A VAMPIRE... AND A WEREWOLF? HEAVEN PROTECT US!

IN HIS CAVE, THE HERMIT CURLS UP BESIDE THE COFFIN AND CLOSSES HIS EYES! A SMILE CROSSES HIS TWISTED LIPS! HE WHISPERS SOFTLY...

ELIDIA! MY ELIDIA!

THE HERMIT'S THOUGHTS GO BACK... BACK TO THAT TIME SO LONG AGO WHEN FIRST HE'D COME UPON THE FORBIDDEN PLANT GROWING HIGH IN THE BRAHAMIAN ALPS...



WOLFSSKANE!
GOOD LORD!

HE'D STUMBLED UPON THE PLANT ACCIDENTALLY! ONE OF ITS SPIKY THORNS HAD SCRATCHED HIS FOREARM...



I... I'M BLEEDING!
THE WOLFSSKANE HAS
INFECTED MY BLOOD!

... AND LESS THAN A MONTH LATER, HE'D LEARNED THE TRUTH! THAT FIRST NIGHT, WHEN THE MOON WAS FULL... HE'D CHANGED...



WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
MY NAILS GROW LONG! MY
EARS PRITCH! MY FACE...
MY FACE...

HIS REFLECTION IN THE SHINING POOL HAD TOLD HIM ALL THERE WAS TO KNOW...



I... I AM A
WEREWOLF!

THAT NIGHT, HE'D KILLED AND FEASTED UPON HIS FIRST VICTIM! THE SECOND MONTH, AT THE TIME OF THE FULL MOON, HE'D KILLED AGAIN! BUT THE THIRD MONTH, AS HE'D BENT OVER HIS THIRD VICTIM...



WHAT'S THAT? SOMEONE
IS COMING! SOMEONE IS COMING!

HE'D DARTED INTO THE BUSHES AND WAITED! SHE'D COME UP TO HIS LATEST VICTIM! ELICIA... BEAUTIFUL ELICIA...



SHE... SHE DOES NOT
SCREAM!

NO! ELICIA HAD NOT SCREAMED! INSTEAD, SHE'D STOODED AND BEGUN TO DRINK HER FILL...



SHE... SHE'S A
VAMPIRE!

HE'D FLUNG HIMSELF FROM HIS HIDING PLACE AND STOOD OVER HER, POINTING.

THEY'D QUARRELED THEN.

WAIT! WHY FIGHT? FROM THERE IS ENOUGH FOR BOTH OF US!

SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL! VERY BEAUTIFUL! IT WAS EASY TO ACCEPT HER OFFER AFTER THEY'D FINISHED.



THEY'D FALLEN IN LOVE! LOVE AT FIRST FRIGHT, YOU MIGHT SAY! ZORGO'D AGREED.

WE WILL MEET NEXT MONTH WHEN THE MOON IS FULL ONCE AGAIN!

I WILL WAIT FOR YOU, ELIGIA!



EVERY MONTH WHEN THE MOON WAS FULL, THEY'D WANDERED OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE, KISSING... TOGETHER.

I WORRY, MY DARLING! WHAT IF SOMEONE SHOULD FIND YOUR SECRET HIDEING PLACE?

THEY WOULD DRIVE A STAKE THROUGH MY HEART, AND DESTROY ME!



SO ZORGO'D APPOINTED HIMSELF GUARDIAN OF ELIGIA'S COFFIN ON MOONLESS NIGHTS. WHEN HE WAS NORMAL AND ELIGIA SLEPT, HE'D MOVED HER COFFIN FROM HIDING PLACE TO HIDING PLACE, KEEPING WELL AHEAD OF THE ENRAGED VILLAGERS THAT SOURED THE COUNTRYSIDE, SEARCHING FOR THEM...

I TAKE CARE OF YOU, MY SWEET!



AND EACH NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON, THEY'D VOWED...

SOMEDAY... SOMEDAY MY DEAR, WE WILL FIND SOMEONE WHO WILL MARRY US!

OH, ZORGO! I HOPE SO!



SUDDENLY, ZORRO STARTS FROM HIS DAY-DREAM! VOICES ECHO THROUGH THE CAVE! THE VILLAGERS HAVE DISCOVERED HIS LATEST HIDING PLACE...



THE EXPLOSION OF A PISTOL THUNDERS THROUGH THE CAVE AND ZORRO PITCHES FORWARD! A SILVER BULLET IN HIS HEART!



THEN THE STEADY RAP-RAP-RAP OF ROCK ON WOOD AS THEY POUND THE STAKE INTO ELIGIA'S CHEST.



THE ANGRY VILLAGERS CARRY THE COFFIN... WITH ZORRO'S AND ELIGIA'S BODIES... BACK TO THEIR LITTLE HAMLET...



THE DEVIL'S GRAVEYARD IS A PLACE WHERE MURDERERS AND OTHER CREATURES OF EVIL ARE INTERRED! THERE... ELIGIA, THE VAMPIRE... AND ZORRO, THE WEREWOLF ARE BURIED.



AS THE TOWNSFOLK HURRY BACK TO THEIR HOMES, AND DARKNESS FALLS UPON THE DEVIL'S GRAVEYARD, STRANGE SOUNDS ARE HEARD... THE SOUNDS OF THE DEAD... LYING IN THEIR GRABLING BEDS.



LATER, IN THE BLACK OF NIGHT, WHEN THINGS OF EVIL CRAWL FROM BENEATH ROTTEN SHELTERS, AND CEMETERIES TOWN, A STRANGE SCENE UNFOLDS! CORPSES PUSH THEM WAYS UP THROUGH MADDOT-INFESTED GRAVE MUD.

DID YOU HEAR?

A WEREWOLF!

A VAMPIRE!

THEY ARE BETROTHEN, ENGAGED!

HURRY!

THERE'S GOING TO BE A WEDDING!

THE VAMPIRE!

AND THE WEREWOLF!

THEY'RE GETTING MARRIED!

AND SO, AS HOWLING WINDS SWIRL THROUGH OPEN MAUSOLEUMS... AS TOTTERING REMAINS OF EVIL STUMBLE TOWARD THE SPOT... AS CREATURES OF THE NIGHT LEER FROM BEHIND TOMBSTONES... AS FOUL OODS OF DECAY AND ROT WAFT THROUGH THE RIGHT AIR... ELICIA AND ZORRO ARE WED! THE MOANING OF THE DEAD THEIR ORGAN MUSIC... THE SCREAMING OF BANSHEES THEIR CHOIR...



THEIR HONEYMOON SUITE IS A MAUSOLEUM... A SLAB OF MARBLE THEIR BED AS IS THE CUSTOM, THE BRIDE IS CARRIED ACROSS THE THRESHOLD... THE STAKE STILL JAWWARDLY JUTTING FROM HER CHEST

AND SOON ALL IS QUIET AGAIN IN THE DEVILS GRAVEYARD! THE CREATURES OF EVIL RETURN TO THEIR RESTING PLACES... THE GRAVES ARE CLOSED... THE WIND DIES DOWN! DARK BREAKS SILENTLY... ON A PEACEFUL SCENE...



AND SO IT REMAINS... FOR DAYS... AND WEEKS... AND MONTHS! THEN, ALMOST A YEAR LATER, THE STIRRING BEGINS AGAIN! THE DARKNESS FALLS, AND THE CREATURES MOVE! THE GRAVES CRACK OPEN AND ROTTEN THINGS PUSH UP...

THINGS OF EVIL STUMBLE TOWARD THE MAUSOLEUM! OTHERS PEER THROUGH THE DOOR, THE BARRICAD WINDOW! THE WIND HOWLS, THE BANSHEES SCREAM...

TONIGHT, ELICIA... AND ZORRO... EXPECT

HURRY! IT IS ALMOST TIME! TONIGHT IS THE NIGHT!



INSIDE THE MAUSOLEUM ELKIRA CRADLES THE LITTLE THING IN HER ARMS! DORGO STANDS OVER THEM...
 PROMPTLY THE CREATURES OF EVIL TITTER AND GIGGLE.

ISN'T IT CUTE?

WHAT IS IT,
 ELICIA?

IT... I THINK IT'S...
 A GIRL!



HEE, HEE! YEP! IT WAS A GIRL, KIDDIES! IT HAD A DEAD
 VAMPIRE FOR A MOTHER, AND A DEAD WEREWOLF
 FOR AN OLD MAN! AND I WAS A DARLIN' Lil' TINKTOO!
 HOW'D YA FEEL? IT WAS ME... THE OLD WITON! YOU
 FIENDS HAVE BEEN ASKIN' ME WHERE I CAME FROM, SO
 I DECIDED TO TELL
 YOU'DEN... BY THE WAY!
 HOW'D YOU LIKE TO
 STEND A FAMILY
 REUNION? MINE?
 NO? WELL, THAT'S
 TOO BAD 'BE ALWAYS
 HAVE ONE SMELL
 OF A TIME! NOW
 I'LL TURN YOU OVER
 TO THE HAUNT-
 KEEPER! DO
 YOU LATER!

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! GREETINGS, MY FINE FETTERED FIENDS! YEP, IT'S YOUR HOST IN HORROR, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO NARRATE ANOTHER UNDEFEATING TALE FROM MY COLLECTION! SO COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, SIT YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT DEAD-MAN'S CHEST, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-GURDLING TARN I CALL...

TAKE YOUR PICK!

THE NAMED LITTLE UNGHIN STOOD UPON THE PORCH OF THE BRADEN HOME, SHIVERING FROM THE BITING WIND THAT SWIFT ACROSS THE SNOW-COVERED LAWN. HIS COAT WAS TORN AND THREADED, AND HIS PANTS, PATCHED. HE HELD A PALE LITTLE HAND UP SHAKILY AS STUART BRADEN SWUNG OPEN THE DOOR AND STARED DOWN AT HIM.

"WELL? WHAT DO YOU WANT?"

"P- PLEASE, MISTER! MY DADDY AIN'T WORKIN'! I AIN'T HAD ANYTHIN' EAT FOR TWO DAYS! COULD YOU SPARE A..."



STUART BRADEN SMILED AT THE GALLON-FACED CHILD BEFORE HIM.

"GO ON, YOU LITTLE BEGGAR! SCRAM! GO ON BACK ACROSS THE TRACKS WHERE YOU CAME FROM!"

"ONLY A QUARTER, MISTER! I GOT A LIL SISTER 'TOM."



STUART SLAMMED THE DOOR IN THE PLEADING BOY'S FACE! EMMA, HIS WIFE, STOOD BEHIND HIM...
DIRTY LITTLE BRAT! SCOUNDREL! HOW COULD YOU BE SO CRUEL, EMMA! STUART?



MR. BRADEN SPUN AROUND, SLAMMING AT HIS WIFE...

YOU MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, EMMA!

BUT THE POOR CHILD LOOKED HALF-STARVED, STU...



IF I GAVE ANYONE SOMETHING, I'D HAVE 'EM ALL COMING HERE... BEGGING! THEY'D LINE UP OUT THERE...

I DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN BE SO GOLD-HEARTED!



THAT'S THE WAY TO GET ALONG IN THIS WORLD, EMMA! YOU'VE GOT TO BE GOLD-HEARTED! OTHERWISE, PEOPLE STEP ALL OVER YOU!

(NONSENSE, STUART! A LITTLE KINDNESS NEVER HURT ANYONE!)



MAN! BE NICE TO SOMEONE... JUST ONCE... AND THEY'LL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU... TRY TO SQUEEZE EVERYTHING THEY CAN FROM YOU! NOT ME! I'M NO SUCKER!

YOU'VE GOT A HEART OF ICE, STUART! SOMEDAY, YOU'LL CHANGE!



BUT STUART BRADEN DIDN'T CHANGE! IN FACT, HE GOT MUCH WORSE...

I'M HOME, EMMA! SUPPER READY? I... I... WHAT'S SHE DOING HERE?

WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING FOR THE GALSIES, STUART! THEY'RE DESTITUTE!



IT'S NO CONCERN OF MINE, EMMA! JOE GALSLEY MADE HIS OWN BED! NOW LET HIM LIE IN IT!

BUT, STU! JOE WAS YOUR BUSINESS PARTNER! MR. GALSLEY CAME HERE TODAY TO ASK YOU TO GIVE HIM A JOB!





I WON HIS SHARE OF THE BUSINESS FARM AND SQUARE, MR. GALSBEY! JOE GAMBLER AND LOST!

BUT... HE'S BEEN OUT OF WORK SINCE THEN!



THAT'S HIS TIGHT LUCK! I CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR HIM! THERE'S JUST NO SPOT FOR HIM IN THE OFFICE!

STU! FOR GOD'S SAKE! DON'T BE SO... SO COLD-HEARTED!



YOU KEEP OUT OF THIS, ENNA! GOOD-BAY, MRS. GALSBEY!

MY HUSBAND HAS A HEART OF ICE, MR. GALSBEY! I...

SOR... SOR... I CAN SEE SOR... SOR...



ENNA AND STUART HAD NO CHILDREN! THEY DID HAVE A DOG...

ANY... ANY?

ENNA! WHAT'S THAT MUTT DOING IN HERE?

SAY, STU! IT'S FREEZING OUTSIDE!



I DON'T GIVE A HOOT! GET HER OUTSIDE... THE MAREY WOMOREL! I WON'T HAVE HER TRACKING UP THE RUN...

STUART! THE POOR THING WAS SHIVERING IN HER KENNEL! SHE'LL FREEZE OUT THERE! PLEASE, STU! JUST THIS ONCE...



EITHER YOU TAKE HER OUTSIDE OR I WILL, ENNA!

HOW CAN YOU BE SO CRUEL, STUART? SO... SO...



SO COLD-HEARTED? GO AHEAD! SAY IT! I'VE GOT A HEART OF ICE! WELL, MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT! NOW GET THAT MUTT OUTSIDE!

SOR... SOR... COME, LADY! COME ON! COME TO MAMA. SOR... SOR...

ONE NIGHT, AS MR. AND MRS. BRADER WERE DRIVING HOME FROM A VISIT TO ENNA'S MOTHER...

SHE DIDN'T LOOK VERY WELL TONIGHT, DID SHE STUART?

I DIDN'T NOTICE! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? ASK ME TO GIVE HER MORE MONEY?

IT WOULDN'T HURT! TEN DOLLARS A WEEK ISN'T VERY MUCH TO LIVE ON THESE DAYS! YOU COULD GET DOWN ON MY ALLOWANCE!

NOTHING DOES! I'VE GOT MYSELF TO THINK OF! IF YOUR OLD MAN HADN'T BEEN SO GENEROUS, YOU MIGHT BE BETTER OFF THAN SHE IS, NOW THAT HE'S DEAD!



PLEASE, STUART! I'M NOT ASKING FOR MYSELF! MOTHER IS OLD! SHE... SHE... BEEP!

HOW? WHAT'S THAT?

THE HEADLIGHTS OF THE BRADER AUTOMOBILE FELL UPON A FIGURE LYING ON THE ROAD...

IT'S A MAN! HE'S... HE'S HURT! LOOK! HE'S BLEEDING!

SOME HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER MUST'VE STRUCK HIM!



STUART PRESSED DOWN ON THE ACCELERATOR AND SPED PAST THE INJURED MAN...

STUART! STOP! HE NEEDS HELP!

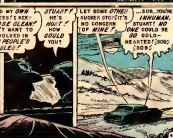
NOT ME, ENNA!

I MIND MY OWN BUSINESS! I KEEP MY NOSE CLEAN! I DON'T WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN OTHER PEOPLE'S TROUBLES!

STUART! HE'S HURT! HOW COULD YOU!

LET SOME OTHER SUCKER STOP! IT'S NO CONCERN OF MINE!

...SOR, YOU'RE INHUMAN, STUART! NO ONE COULD BE SO COOLD-HEARTED! BOWE DOGS



THE FOLLOWING WEEK...



WHAT ARE YOU
BARKING ABOUT?

JOE... SOB...
JOE BARKER?
YOUR EX-
BUSINESS PART-
NER? HE COM-
MITTED SUICIDE!

WHY? COULDN'T
FACE IT? WHY
TOOK THE EASY
WAY OUT?



HE LEFT HIS
WIFE AND CHILD
PENNYLESS!
WE'VE GOT TO
MAKE IT UP
TO HER!

THERE ARE AGENCIES
TO TAKE CARE OF
PEOPLE IN HER
PREDICAMENT,
ENNA! NOT ME!
IT'S NOT MY
BUSINESS!

STUART!
YOU, YOU
COULDN'T!



OH COULDN'T I, ENNA? ARE YOU
FORGETTING? I'M COLD-
HEARTED STUART... THE
MAN WITH THE HEART OF
ICE! REMEMBER?

NOW... SOB...
SOB... HOW
COULD I
FORGET?



A FEW DAYS LATER, ENNA RECEIVED THE NEWS...

IT'S... MOTHER, STU! SHE'S
ILL! SHE NEEDS A
DOCTOR!

SO WHAT AM I
SUPPOSED TO DO?
I GAVE HER TEN
BUCKS A WEEK!
LET HER SEND
FOR ONE!



SHE DOESN'T HAVE THE MONEY!
STUART! PLEASE LET ME
CALL A DOCTOR FOR HER!
I'LL PAY FOR IT!

ALL RIGHT! BUT IF
COMES OUT OF YOUR
ALLOWANCE! SHE'S
YOUR MOTHER!



SO ENNA SENT FOR A DOCTOR TO TAKE CARE OF
HER SICK MOTHER...

HOW IS SHE, DOCTOR?

YOUR MOTHER IS IN
SERIOUS CONDITION.
MRS. BRADSHAW SHE NEEDS
TO BE HOSPITALIZED
IMMEDIATELY! AN
OPERATION IS NECESS-
ARY! THIS WILL COST
A GREAT DEAL!





NATURALLY, STUART WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE TURN OF EVENTS.

WHAT? A HOSPITAL? AN OPERATION? AND WHO'S GOING TO PAY FOR THIS?

STUART! IT'S MY MOTHER! SURELY, IN SUCH AN EMERGENCY...



WHAT IS YOUR OLD LADY EVER DO FOR ME? SUPPOSE THE OPERATION DOESN'T HELP? IT'LL BE THROWN OUT MONEY!

HOW CAN YOU... SOB... LOOK AT IT... SO COLDBLY?



BECAUSE SHE ISN'T MY MOTHER! SHE'S YOURS! THAT'S NOW!

FOR GOD'S SAKE, STUART...



AND WHEN THE DOCTOR CALLED...

I... I'M SORRY, DOCTOR! MY HUSBAND, SOB... SOR... REFUSES... SOB... SOB... TO SOB... PAY FOR... SOB...

BUT YOUR MOTHER MAY DIE, MRS. BRADEN!



I... I KNOW! SOB! D... DO THE BEST YOU... YOU CAN! DO YOUR BEST, DOCTOR! I'M SOB... SORRY!

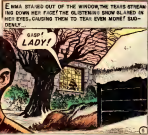
I'M HELPLESS UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, MRS. BRADEN! YOUR MOTHER NEEDS A SPECIALIST!



EMMA HUNG UP AND TURNED TO STUART'S FACE WAS A BLOODY MASK...

I... I HATE YOU, STUART BRADEN!

HENRY!



EMMA STARED OUT OF THE WINDOW, THE TEARS STREAMING DOWN HER FACE! THE GUSTING SNOW BLAMED IN HER EYES, CAUSING THEM TO TEAR EVEN MORE! SURELY...

GASP! LADY!

EMMA HURRIED OUT TO THE STILL FORM LYING HALF OUT OF THE KENNEL! SHE PICKED IT UP.

LADY? SOB...
MY LADY?



THE DOG WAS STIFF! FROZER STIFF! THE DOG WAS DEAD...

HE... SOB... HE KILLED YOU! HE MADE ME LOOK YOU OUT, SOB... AND YOU FROZE... SOB... YOU FROZE... SOB... TO DEATH...



EMMA CAME INTO THE HOUSE GRASPING THE DEAD DOG IN HER ARMS! SHE STARED AT STUART...

WHAT? WITH YOU?

LADY! SHE'S DEAD!



STUART SHRUGGED! EMMA'S EYES BEGAN TO PULSE! HER CHIEFS GREW HOT! THE PHONE RANG...

HELLO? YES? THIS IS MRS. BRADEN?

I... I'M SORRY, MRS. BRADEN! I DID ALL I COULD! YOUR... YOUR MOTHER JUST DIED!



EMMA HUNG UP AND WENT INTO THE KITCHEN! WHEN SHE CAME OUT, SHE HAD HER ARMS BEHIND HER BACK! SHE MOVED TOWARD STUART, HER VOICE SHAKING UNCONTROLLABLY! SHE PRACTICALLY SCREAMED...

MURDERER!
ICE-HEARTED
MURDERER!

EMMA!
DON'T LOOK
AT ME LIKE
THAT!



WHEN THE POLICE CAME TO THE BRADEN HOME IN ANSWER TO THE NEIGHBORS' FRANTIC PHONE CALLS, THEY FOUND EMMA KNEELING BESIDE STUART'S BODY, CHIPPING AWAY AT HIS CHEST WITH A **BLOOD-SHARPED ICE-PICK!** SHE'D BEEN AT IT FOR SOME TIME! THEY COULD TELL! AS SHE CHOPPED, SHE'D MUTTER HYSTERICALLY...

ICE-HEARTED... SOB... SOB...
ICE-HEART... SOB...
ICE... ICE... EH... EH...



HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S MY **WARMING** LITTLE STORY FOR THIS ISSUE, KIDDIES! AFTER THE **MOM** IN THE **LITTLE WHITE GOATS** TOOK EMMA AWAY, THE **GORWONER** EXAMINED WHAT WAS **LEFT OF STUART BRADEN'S BODY!** KNOW WHAT HE FOUND IN THE **SAPPING HOLE** EMMA'D YOUN IN STUART'S CHEST? YEP! YOU GUESSED IT! **SHARPED ICE!** BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE **PAULY** FIELDS, TAKE FOR A **COLD** DRINK! NO? **HMMM!** TOO BAD! **BYE, NOW!**



E.C. FANS!

**YOU'VE WRITTEN!
YOU'VE TELEGRAPHED!
YOU'VE PHONED!
YOU'VE THREATENED US!
SO HERE IT IS! THE MAGAZINE
YOU'VE DEMANDED!**



**ANOTHER
"NEW TREND"
SURE-FIRE WINNER!**

**ON SALE NOW
AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!**

BEE-NIP!



Strand just managed to slip the tiny vial into his pocket when he heard footsteps in the corridor. Instinctively he glanced at the floor: he had to get out before someone discovered Mr. Blake's body! If anyone barged in now it meant a murder charge!

Strand sighed with relief as the steps hurried past. He opened the door slightly... the coast was clear. Slipping into the hallway and closing the door silently behind him, he looped a metal sign over the knob. *DO NOT DISTURB*, it said. Then, casually as he dared, he walked toward his own office.

If those snooping secretaries kept their noses out of the chief's office, Strand thought, he'd be able to wander out of the office as usual at 5. With the vial containing liquid worth at least \$250,000! Strand silently rejoiced as he toyed with the idea of such wealth; served Blake right for trying to keep secret from his Assistant the formula for this fluid which the old man had perfected. *Blake's Bee-Nip*, the old devil planned to call it... more likely, now, that it would be marketed as *Strand's Secret Syrup*! All he had to do, Strand realized, was get the liquid out of the office and hide it until excitement over Blake's death subsided!

With a smug smile Strand examined the mass of papers on his desk. Production graphs for each of the massive Honey-Combs under his supervision... maintenance instructions for the Bee-Hives assigned him... it would all be shunted into the past as soon as he got that vial outside the office! For he knew enough about raising bees and processing their

honey to appreciate the value of this fluid he had murdered for! If the old man had been so certain about the attraction this stuff would exert on bees... and it would lure bees the way catnip worked on felines, and send honey production soaring... then Strand would reap a fortune from the stuff!

The phone jangled and Strand picked it up nervously. Mr. Blake's body had just been discovered, he heard! The Police were here and, learning of Blake's Bee-Nip, suspected robbery as the motive! All employees of Blake's Bee-Hive were to be searched for the fluid which would indicate guilt!

As soon as he hung up, Strand broke the vial and poured the fluid into his palms. Nervously he spread the clear liquid on his face, as if it was suntan lotion. He'd *still* walk out of here, unsuspected of murder... the fluid in his possession, to be recovered as soon as he had a chance!

10 minutes later, after the Police had admitted they could find traces of neither fluid nor Mr. Blake's killer, Strand excused himself and walked toward the Bee-Room, on his way to the factory exit. He had only to pass through the room where the insects were housed, and the Bee-Nip was his!

Swiftly he crossed the Bee-Room, smiling secretly at his triumph. Suddenly a rasping whine droned toward him. Strand whirled and saw a gigantic wave of bees swooping ferociously toward him! He reached frantically for the knob, but a scorching blanket wrapped itself around his head and toppled him to the floor by sheer angry weight. His arms thrashed convulsively as he writhed and tried to kick free, but before anyone could get to his side the bees had wriggled frenziedly into Strand's tortured nostrils... had madly clogged his swollen mouth... had brutally choked the life out of him, in their desire to partake of the magic fluid on the pulpy mess which moments before had been a man's face!



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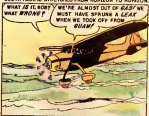
IN THIS GRUESOME TALE OF
TERROR, EVERYTHING IS...

SHIP-SHAPE!



THE ENGINE OF THE TINY PLANE SPUTTERED AND
COULDED DOWN BELOW, THE CHOPPY WATERS OF THE
SOUTH PACIFIC STRETCHED FROM HORIZON TO HORIZON.

INSIDE THE PLANE, THE FOUR PASSENGERS STARED
IN HORROR AT THE WHITE NEEDLE OF THE FUEL
GAUGE AS IT TREMBLED OVER THE *EMPTY* MARK.



WHAT IS IT ABOUT
WHAT WROTE?

WE'RE ALMOST OUT OF GAS! WE
MUST HAVE SPRUNG A LEAK
WHEN WE TOOK OFF FROM
SUVA!



HOW LONG
CAN WE
LAST, BOB?

ANOTHER TEN
MINUTES, PERHAPS!
PROFESSION! SEE
ANYTHING DOWN
THERE? AN ISLAND
OR A SHIP?

NOT A
THING!
OOO HELP
US! WE'RE
ALL GOING
TO DIE!

TAKE IT EASY, PROF! BOB CAN GET US DOWN ON THE WATER!

THERE'S A RUBBER LIFE-Raft STOWED BACK THERE!

HOLD ON, FOLKS! WE'RE GOING IN!

THE TINY PLANE'S ENGINE SPIT AND DIED! SILENCE CLOSED IN! THE BLUE-GREEN SEUL RUSHED UP TO MEET THE GLIDING CRAFT...

LUCKY THE WATER'S CALM!

AS SOON AS WE HIT, CLIMB ABOUT THE WIND!

WHAT ABOUT THE SEAWIND?

SOON THE GAFFLED AIRPLANE TOUCHED THE OCEAN SURFACE, SPINDING ACROSS IT! A FOAMY SPRAY KICKED UP AND FANDED OUT BEHIND.



FINALLY, THE PLANE CAME TO A STOP, RESTING HALF-SUBMERGED IN THE CHOPPY WATER! THE FOUR PASSENGERS SCRAMBLED OUT ONTO THE WING! FIRST, PROFESSOR HENRY WOLFSON, THE FAMOUS ZOOLOGIST.

DOCTOR RUDOLF BERGER, THE PROFESSOR'S SCOUT, A FAMOUS BIOLOGIST, FOLLOWED.

HURRY, HENRY! WATER'S COMING INTO THE CABIN!

I'M MOVING AS FAST AS I CAN, RUDE!

LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND, MISS GRACE?

THANK YOU, DOCTOR!

LET'S GO! JEAN! THE PLANE WON'T STAY AFLOAT TOO LONG! I WANT TO GET THIS LIFE-Raft INFLATED...



AFTER JEAN GRACE, PROFESSOR WOLFSON'S SECRETARY, CLIMBED OUT ONTO THE WING, THE PILOT, ROBERT BRYEN, PASSED HER THE COMPACT LIFE-Raft.

SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, THE FOUR SURVIVORS SAT Huddled IN THEIR RUBBER LIFE-Raft, WATCHING THE DISABLED PLANE TURN TAIL UP AND SINK BENEATH THE WAVES.

TURN THIS VALVE, JEAN! THE RAFT WILL INFLATE ITSELF! I'M GOING BACK FOR THE FOOD!

HURRY, BOB! WE'RE GOING DOWN!

INFLATE THE LIFE-Raft, MISS GRACE! I CAN'T SWIM!



THERE SHE GOES!

BRYEN! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE WE ARE?

ABOUT FOUR HUNDRED MILES SOUTHWEST OF GUAM, PROFESSOR! WE'RE JUST SOUTH OF THE SHIPPING LANES!



TWO DAYS LATER, THE SMALL SUPPLY OF FOOD AND WATER BOB HAD MARSHED TO SALVAGE HAD BEEN USED UP! THE SURVIVORS WATCHED WITH MOROSE FASCINATION AS SEVERAL BLACK FINS SWIFT THROUGH THE WATER ABOUT THE RAFT...



"SHARKS!" "LOOK! THERE! SEE IT?" "A SHIP! A SHIP!"

AS THE TINY LIFE-RAFT NEARED THE SLOWLY MOVING TANKER...



"THEY DON'T SEEM TO SEE US!" "BOB! DO YOU NOTICE SOMETHING STRANGE?" "YOU'RE RIGHT, JEAN! THERE'S NO SMOKE COMING FROM THE STACKS!"

SOON, THE SURVIVORS HAD APPROACHED THE TANKER CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE...



"THERE'S NO SMOKE! IT LOOKS DESERTED!" "A DERELICT SHIP!"

THE BLACK SILHOUETTE OF A SMALL TANKER LOOKED UP TO THE EAST! PROFESSOR WOLFSON BEGAN TO SHAKE HIS JACKET FRANTICALLY...



"HELP! HELP!" "START PADDLING! HURRY!" "SIT DOWN! PROFESSOR! YOU'LL UPSET THE RAFT AND THOSE BLASTED SHARKS'LL GET US!"



"WHAT'S THAT STRANGE SMELL?" "BOB! I'M TERRIFIED! FRIGHT-ENED?" "NO! I'M WORRIED! SHIP OR NO, WE'RE GOING ABOARD! AT LEAST IT'S AFLOAT, AND THERE MAY BE SOME FOOD ON IT!"

A FRAYED ROPE-LADDER HUNG OVER THE SIDE OF THE DESERTED TANKER! BOB TIED THE RAFT TO IT...



"PHEW! IT SMELLS MUSTY... HOLDF!" "THE HULL SEEMS TO BE COVERED WITH SOME KIND OF MOSS!" "I'LL GO FIRST! YOU NEXT, JEAN! THE PROFESSOR AND THE DOG WILL FOLLOW!"

SOON, THE FOUR GRAB-BYTES STOOD UPON THE FOUL-SMELLING DECK OF THE STRANGE VESSEL...



"THE DECK PLATES! IT FEELS AS IF THEY WERE WAX UNDER FOOT!" "YOU'RE RIGHT, ZERGER! THEY FEEL SOFT!" "SPOONY!" "G'WON! LET'S SEE IF THERE'S ANY WATER ON BOARD!"

FOUR-FO, BRYEN! I WANT TO EXAMINE THIS **FUNGUS** THAT SEEMS TO COVER THE ENTIRE SHIP!

OKAY, PROFESSOR! SUI FOUR-SELF! COMING, JEAN!

RIGHT BEHIND YOU, BOB!

I'LL STAY WITH HENRY, MR. BRYEN!



BOB AND JEAN MOVED ACROSS THE SPONGY DECK AND DOWN THE MOSS-LADEN GANWAY INTO THE CABIN...

BORF! WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HAPPENED TO THE GREF?

SEARCH ME, JEAN! PROBABLY AKA MOORED HERE! WASTE THE ENGINES...

YAAAAAH!



GOOD LORD! WHAT WAS THAT?

THE PROFESSOR! HE SCREAMED!

MR. BRYEN! HELP! COME QUICKLY! OH, MY GOD...



BOB AND JEAN REACHED THE DECK JUST IN TIME TO SEE THE PROFESSOR... HIS FACE TWISTED IN EXORCISTATING PAIN, HIS ARMS CLAWING THE AIR... SINKING SUDDENLY INTO A SPONGY GOOING POOL! AN OOR OF DECAT DRAFTED TOWARD THEM...



FINALLY THE PROFESSOR'S SCREAMS SUBSIDED AND HE SANK BEHIND THE DECK-SURFACE! THE GOOING POOL SEEMED TO HARDEN OVER THE SPOT...

IT'S... BOB! HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE!

WHAT HAPPENED, DOCTOR ZERGER?



HENRY... HE WANTED TO EXAMINE THE **FUNGUS** THAT COVERS EVERYTHING! HE TOOK OUT HIS POCKET KNIFE AND STARTED TO SCRAPE THE DECK! THEN GURGLE - CHOKED.

GO ON, DOCTOR! THEN?



HE SEEMED TO CUT THROUGH SOME SORT OF MEMBRANE! A FOUL-SMELLING POOL GOOED FROM THE INCIDENT! IT... IT ENGULFED HIM! HE... CHOKED... HE... JUST SEEMED TO DISSOLVE! YOU... YOU SAW THE REST!

I... I FEEL SICK, BOB! I...



JEAN PASSED OUT IN BOB'S ARMS!
DOCTOR ZERGER SCREAMED AT HIM:

"BE CAREFUL, BRYEN!
PUT HER DOWN
GENTLY!"

JEAN!
JEAN!
HONEY! OH,
LORD! I WISH
WE HAD SOME
WATER!

"WE'VE GOT TO BE
CAREFUL NOT TO
DAMAGE THE
MEMBRANE THAT
COVERS THE SHIP!
OTHERWISE WE'LL
SUFFER THE SAME
FATE AS PROFESSOR
WOLFSON!"

WHAT IS
IT, DOCTOR?
WHAT'S
HAPPENED
TO THIS
TANKER?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE PETRIED
WOOD IS, BRYEN? IT'S WOOD
THAT HAS TURNED TO STONE!
YET THE STONE SHOWS EVERY
GRAIN... EVERY FIBRE... EVERY
Pore OF THE WOOD! THE STONE
TOOK THE WOOD'S FORM!
UNDERSTAND?

WHAT'S
THAT GOT
TO DO
WITH THE
SHIP?



"THIS SHIP IS LIKE A PIECE OF PETRIED
WOOD! ONLY IT HASN'T TURNED TO
STONE! SOME FIBRES... SOME STRANGE
LIVING MATTER TOOK OVER THIS SHIP
ABSORBING IT... ASSUMING ITS FORM!
THIS SHIP IS THAT LIVING
MATTER NOW!"

JEAN?
O'MON,
DASH!
WE'VE
GOT TO
GET OUT
OF HERE!



JEAN OPENED HER EYES! SHE SHUDDERED! BOB
LIFTED HER IN HIS STRONG ARMS...

LET'S GO,
DOCTOR!

PUT HER DOWN! YOU'RE
BOTH TOO HEAVY...



DOCTOR ZERGER'S WARNING CAME TOO LATE! BOB
FELT THE SPONY DECK BITE UNDER HIS FEET... LIKE A
PIECE OF PAPER TEARING! DOCTOR ZERGER LUNGED
FORWARD...

LOOK OUT!



BOB FELT A STINGING PAIN IN HIS LEFT FOOT AS
DOCTOR ZERGER SHOVED HIM HARD! HE AND JEAN
WENT SPRAWLING! THE DOCTOR WAS CAUGHT IN THE
SUCKING GULPING POOL THAT COOED FROM THE SPOT
WHERE THE YOUNG COUPLE HAD JUST BEEN STANDING...

YAAAAAAGHH!

DON'T LOOK, BOB...
BABY! IT...
IT'S HOR-
RIBLE!



SOON THE DOCTOR'S SCREAMING OFF, AS ONLY HIS CLUTCHING HAND REMAINED ABOVE THE SHIMMERING POOL...



THE YOUNG COUPLE SCRAMBLED DOWN TO THE LIFE-RAFT AND PADDLED AWAY FROM THE NIGHTMARISH VESSEL...

TO RATHER FACE THE HARD-SHIPS OF THE OPEN SEA THAN STAY ON BOARD THAT HORROR?

DON'T WORRY, HONEY! THEY'LL SPOT US! THEY'RE PROBABLY OUT LOOKING FOR US RIGHT NOW!



SUDDENLY BOB LOOKED DOWN AND GASPED! JEAN FOLLOWED HIS TERRIFIED GAZE! FROM A RUPTURED SPOT ON THE LIFE-RAFT'S AIR-TUBE, A SICKLY, FOUL-SMELLING, BUBBLING, GULPING Ooze FLOURED OUT, SPREADING OVER THE BOTTOM.

THE... THE HORRIBLE STUFF! IT SPREAD TO THE LIFE-RAFT WHILE IT WAS TIED UP!

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!



...AND EVEN THAT SOON DISSOLVED INTO IT? BOB LOOKED DOWN AT HIS LEFT FOOT! THE SHOE HAD BEEN EATEN AWAY! THE SOCK, TOO! THE RAW AND BLEEDING FLESH APPEARED AS IF IT HAD BEEN DIPPED IN MOLTEN METAL...

BOB! YOU'RE HURRY!

IT'S NOTHING JEAN!



BOB TOOK JEAN'S ARM AND GUIDED HER SLOWLY... CAREFULLY... TO WHERE THE FUMOUS-COVERED ROPE-LADDER HUNG OVER THE SIDE OF THE SHIP...

EASY, NOW! TAKE IT EASY! LET'S GET OFF THIS THING!

THANK GOODNESS YOU TIED THE LIFE-RAFT UP INSTEAD OF SETTING IT ADrift!



THE NEXT DAY... THEIR MOUTHS PARCHED FROM LACK OF WATER, THEIR STOMACHS ACHING FROM HUNGER... BOB AND JEAN SPOTTED THE PLANE HIGH OVERHEAD! BOB BEGAN TO WAIVE HIS SHIRT.

THEY SEE US! THEY SEE US!

OH, BOB! DARLING! WE'RE SAVED!



HEE, HEE! 'ER? DOESN'T A STORY LIKE THAT MELT YOUR HEART? IT DID BOB'S AND JEAN'S! IN FACT HER ONLY THEIR HEARTS! BUT THEIR WHOLE BODIES MELTED AS THE Ooze FILLED THE RAFT-FLOOR! NOW WAS THE LIFE-RAFT PUNCTURED SO THE STUFF GOZED OUT! WELL, IT SEEMS THAT BOB'S BIG TOE HAD A NAIL-NAIL, AND HE GOT EXCITED WAVING TO THE PLANE! GRAY! NO IT WASN'T MUCH OF A KICK! ACTUALLY...

HEE, HEE! IT DIDN'T TAKE VERY MUCH! NOW COMES THE CRAFT-KEEPER!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

WELL, HERE'S ONE MORE TO GO, AND THEN YOU CAN ALL RETIRE FOR YOUR NIGHTMARES! YEP! IT'S YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER'S CHANCE TO TERRORIZE YOU, NOW! COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! FLOP DOWN ON THAT PLANK, AND I'LL TELL YOU A DELICIOUS LITTLE TALE, GUARANTEED NOT TO SCARE YOU! IT'S CALLED...

THIS LITTLE PIGGY...



NORTH OF DELHI, NEAR MEERUT ON THE RIVER
RANGES IN INDIA, A YOUNG BRITISH OFFICER REINED
UP HIS PANTING STEED AND POINTED OFF TOWARD
THE GRASSY CLEARING BEFORE HIM.

LOOK THERE! IN THE
BRUSH! A
WILD BOAR!

I SEE, SAHIB! I SEE
HIM! THIS LOOKS LIKE
GOOD HUNTING
GROUND FOR BOARS!



THE BRITISH OFFICER AND HIS INDIAN SERVANT SPURRED THEIR HORSES AND CONTINUED ON THEIR TRIP! SEVERAL HOURS LATER, THEY REACHED A WALLED SETTLEMENT.

THERE'S THE GARRISON, SINIA!

A SENTRY SEES US, SINIA! HE SIGNALS US TO STOP!



THE SENTRY LEANED OVER THE STOCKADE WALL, AIMING HIS RIFLE.

HALT, YOU TWO! WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE WITH THE GOVERNOR?

I AM LIEUTENANT HORACE STURDY, ROYAL BENGAL LANCERS! THE GOVERNOR STURDY IS MY UNCLE!



OH, YES, LIEUTENANT! THE GOVERNOR IS EXPECTING YOU! OPEN THE GATES!

OPEN THE GATES!



THE STOCKADE GATES WERE SHUNG BACK AND LIEUTENANT STURDY AND HIS SERVANT SINIA NOOD INTO THE GARRISON ENCLOSURE.

HORACE! MY BOY! AGOOD TO SEE YOU!

UNCLE FELIX! YOU'RE LOOKING WELL!



LATER, AT TEA, LIEUTENANT STURDY QUERIED HIS UNCLE...

I SEE THERE'RE PLENTY OF WILD BOAR IN THESE PARTS. UNCLE! WHEN IS THE NEXT HUNT?

HUNT? OH, NO! WE HUNT NO BOAR IN MERTU, HORACE!



WHAT? YOU HAVE NO FERT GLOBE, UNCLE? YOU DON'T GO FIB-STICKING HERE?

HEAVENS, NO!M BOY! THE BOAR IS A SACRED ANIMAL WHEREUFT THE INDIAN TRIBESMEN HERE WORSHIP IT!



BAH! YOU ACTUALLY WORRY ABOUT WHAT THOSE HEATHEN DEVILS THINK? NOT ME! THE FIRST CHANCE I GET, I'M GOING...

YOU'LL DO NO SUCH THING, HORACE! I FORBID IT! IT MIGHT MEAN A NASTY UPRISING IF YOU WERE TO KILL ONE OF THE SACRED BOARS!



BUT IGNORING HIS UNCLE'S WARNING, BEFORE DAWN THE NEXT DAY, LIEUTENANT STURDY AND HIS MOUNTED SERVANT RODE OUT OF THE GARRISON ENCLOSURE ARMED WITH SPEARS.



WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK BEFORE UNCLE FELIX GETS UP, SIMIA!

YES, SAMIE!

HALF AN HOUR LATER THE TWO MEN SPOTTED THEIR QUARRY HOBBSING ABOUT IN THE LOW GRASS OF AN OPEN CLEARING...



LOOK, DANIS!

I SEE HIM, SIMIA! I'LL TRY THE FIRST PASS!

SPURRING HIS HORSE, THE LIEUTENANT BORE DOWN UPON THE UNSUSPECTING BOAR, HIS SPEAR RAISED! THE BEAD-EYED ANIMAL TURNED, SNORTING, AT THE SOUND OF THE DAWDING HORSE...



DESPITE ITS AWKWARD APPEARANCE, A BOAR IS QUITE SWIFT! LIEUTENANT STURDY'S QUARRY SPUN AROUND AND STARTED OFF THROUGH THE LOW GRASS! THE LIEUTENANT'S SWIFT STEERED QUICKLY CLOSED THE GAP BETWEEN HIM AND THE SCURRYING ANIMAL...



SUDDENLY, THE CRAFTY WILD HOG 'JINKED' OR TURNED SHARPLY IN ITS TRACKS! LIEUTENANT STURDY PULLED UP SHARPLY ON THE REINS, AND HIS HORSE REARED...



THE LIEUTENANT HUNG FOR A MOMENT, AS IF SUSPENDED IN MID-AIR... THEN FELL TO THE GROUND! THE SQUEALING BOAR SWUNG TOWARD HIM, ITS RED-EYES BLAZING... ITS LETHAL TUSKS LOWERED! IT CHARGED...



SIMIA! HELP!

I COME, SAMIE...

SIMIA SPED ACROSS THE CLEARING AND, AS HE CROSSED BETWEEN THE PROSTRATE LIEUTENANT AND THE CHARGING WILD BOAR, PLUNGED HIS LANCE INTO THE SNORTING HOG'S BACK...



THERE... YOU LOWLY PIG...

GOOD SHOT, SIMIA!

THE FATALLY INJURED BOAR ROLLED OVER AND LAY QUITE STILL! SIMA DISMOUNTED AND STOOD OVER IT! LIEUTENANT STURDY GOT TO HIS FEET AND DUSTED HIMSELF OFF...

WE... WE'D BETTER NOT MENTION MY CLOSE CALL TO MY UNCLE. SIMA! HE WILL BE ANGRY ENOUGH AS IS...

AS YOU WISE, SAHIB? WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THE BOAR WE HAVE KILLED?

WHY, YOU'RE GOING TO PREPARE IT THE WAY WE DO IN JAGIR, SIMA! I'LL SHOW YOU NOW! ONE TASTE OF A WELL-ROASTED BOAR, AND UNCLE WILL FORGET TO BE ANNOYED WITH ME!

VERY GOOD, SAHIB! COME! THE BOAR IS COMING UP! YOUR UNCLE WILL BE EATING SOON!



LATER, IN THE GARRISON KITCHEN, LIEUTENANT STURDY SHOWS SIMA HOW TO PREPARE ROAST-BOAR...

FIRST YOU BOIL THE ANIMAL, YES, IN THIS KAT OF BOILING WATER, SIMA! THAT IS HOW YOU REMOVE THE BOAR'S BRISTLES...

AFTER YOU'VE BOILED THE HAIRS OFF, YOU ROAST THE BOAR ON A SPIT OVER A BED OF RED-HOT COALS!

YES, SAHIB!

YOU'LL SERVE THE ROASTED BOAR ON A WOODEN PLATTER WITH AN APPLE IN ITS MOUTH TOMORROW AT DINNER, SIMA!

YES, SAHIB!



AND SO, THAT NIGHT...

I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU, UNCLE! TONIGHT WE FEAST UPON SOMETHING SPECIAL! ALL RIGHT, SIMA!

A SURPRISE, HORROR? HOW NICE!

SIMA ENTERED, CARRYING THE ROASTED BOAR! ITS TUGGLENT ODOUR FILLED THE DINING-ROOM! IT LAY CROUCHING, UPON THE GRAY-STAINED PLANK... AN APPLE IN ITS MOUTH...

YES, UNCLE! TONIGHT... WE EAT ROAST BOAR!

GOOD LORD! HORROR! YOU IDIOT!



ONE OF THE NATIVE MERKUT SERVANTS STARED IN HORROR AT THE ROAST BOAR! THE GOVERNOR EXPLODED.

GET THAT BLASTED THING OUT OF HERE!

BUT, UNCLE! AREN'T YOU EVEN GOING TO TASTE IT? IT'S DELICIOUS!

GOVERNOR STURDY SHOT A GLANCE AT THE NATIVE SERVANT WHOSE FACE NOW WAS A GRIM MASK SHOWING NO EMOTION.

I TOLD YOU ABOUT THE NATIVES IN THESE PARTS, HORRACE! NOW I'LL HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO THEIR FURIAL CHIEF!

NONSENSE, UNCLE! NO ONE SAW ME SPEAR THE BLASTED PIG!

THE MERKUT BOWED AND LEFT THE DINING-ROOM.

YOU STUPID FOOL! THAT SERVANT IS A MEMBER OF THE LOCAL TRIBES! HE'LL REPORT IT!

I'M SORRY, UNCLE! I DIDN'T KNOW...

THE GOVERNOR GLARED AT HIS NEPHEW.

FROM NOW ON, UNTIL I CAN SNEAK YOU OUT OF THIS PROVINCE, YOUR LIFE ISN'T WORTH TWO SMILING! YOU'LL STAY WITHIN THE GARRISON WALLS! I UNDERSTAND!

I UNDERSTAND, UNCLE!

THE NEXT DAY

WELL, I SAW THE CHIEF OF THE MERKUTS TODAY AND MADE A FORMAL APOLOGY! I TOLD HIM YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT THEY HELD THE BOAR IN SUCH HIGH REGARD! I'VE ASSURED HIM IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN! YOU'RE LEAVING HERE TOMORROW!

YES, UNCLE!

AFTER GOVERNOR STURDY LEFT HIS NEPHEW'S ROOM.

DID YOU HEAR THAT, SIMAS? WE'RE GETTING RICHES OUT TOMORROW!

I HEAR, SAH!

WELL, I'M NOT LEAVING TILL I GET ME A BOAR'S HEAD TO BRING BACK WITH ME TO KADIN!

NO, SAH! THAT IS NOT WISE! LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE!



THE NEXT DAY, BEFORE SUNRISE, LIEUTENANT HORACE STURDY, ROYAL BENGAL LANDERS, RODE OUT INTO THE BOAR COUNTRY WITH HIS SPEAR...



HORACE SPOTTED A BOAR SOON AFTER HE LOWERED HIS SPEAR AND KICKED HIS HORSE! THE WILD PIG SMOKED.



IT WHEELED SHARPLY... STARTING TO RUN ON ITS SHORT LITTLE LEGS! HORACE WAS OVER IT... HIS LANCE PASSED...



THEN THE SPEAR WAS HAMMED HOME! THE WILD BOAR SQUEELED, ROLLING OVER AND OVER! LIEUTENANT STURDY DISMOUNTED AND KNELT TO SEVER ITS HEAD! HE NEVER NOTICED THE BROWN MUSCULAR HAND SEIZE HIS HORSE'S DAWDLING REINS...



THE WHIMMY OF HIS HORSE MADE HORACE LOOK UP! A MEEBUT TRIBESMAN SAT ASTRIDE THE STEED! A ROUGHLY HORNED LANCE HUNG IN THE NATIVE'S HAND...



WHAT TWO? I SAY! GET OFF MY

RUN... INFIDEL!

THE MEEBUT POINTED OFF TO—TOWARD THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING.



RUN! RUN OR I SPEAR YOU WHERE YOU STAND!

W-W-WAIT! I.E.

THE LANCE WAS RAISED! LIEUTENANT STURDY BACKED AWAY FROM ITS RAZOR-SHARP POINT! THEN HE TURNED...AND RAN.



HELP! HELP!

HE HAD ALMOST REACHED THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING WHEN HE HEARD THE HORSE'S HOOFES BEHIND HIM...



NO! NO!

HORACE TURNED TO SEE THE MEEBUT CHASING DOWN UPON HIM, THE LANCE POISED...



YAAAAAAAAAAAAA...OAK!

HIS SCREAM WAS CUT SHORT AS THE SPEAR WAS RAMMED HOME.



THAT NIGHT, LIEUTENANT STURDY'S WORRIED UNCLE ENTERED THE BARRISON DINING-ROOM WITH LITTLE APPETITE. EVEN THAT SOON VANISHED WHEN HE CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE FIGURE ON THE TABLE! IT LAY IN A CROUCHED POSITION ON A HUGE PLANK! ITS HAIR HAD BEEN BOILED OFF, AND ITS FLESH BROWNED TO A CRISP! IN ITS MOUTH, WAS A JUICY RED APPLE...



GOOD LORD! HORACE!

HEH, HEH! SO IF YOU KNOW ANY JOKES, KIDDIES, TAKE A LESSON FROM THE MEEBUT! YEP! THAT'S MY STORY! POOR HORACE WAS ROASTED, THROUGH AND THROUGH! THERE HAIN'T BEEN MUCH BOAR-HUNTING IN MEEBUT SINCE THEN, THOUGH! SEEMS THAT NOBODY WANTS TO END UP ON A GRAY-STAINED PLANK! AS THE MEEBUT CHIEF PUTS IT, "AN APPLE A DAY KEEPS THE HUNTERS AWAY!" AIN'T IT THE FACT? WE NOW! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MND, TALKED FROM THE CRYPT!



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Fun-filled Flights!**

You'll thrill and amaze your friends, be the envy of your neighborhood with this real JET airplane. The JETEX JAVELIN is a colorful, sleek-looking 14 inches of gleamed lightning. It will fly 1,000 feet in a scale speed of 400 miles per hour! It takes off under its own power, loops, circles, darts and then goes into a long glide and comes to a beautiful landing.

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YOU
can WIN
this big 15"
Silver Trophy
as Roger
just did

When I realized I
was a skinny, sick
weakling, I was shy
with girls because I
had NOTHING to show
off. A few weeks
after starting the
Jowett course my body
was the best in the
neighborhood. Now I
get respect and ad-
miration from every
fellow and girl I meet.

Egon Ohlsson

ROGER
HIRSCH
was an
112 lb.
6 ft.
weakling
LOOK
AT HIM
NOW!



Aren't YOU as SICK and Tired as I was
of being SKINNY?

CHICKEN-CHESTED
SPINDLE-ARMED
NARROW-SHOULDERED
SHORT-WINDED
WEAK, HALF-ALIVE
JERRED, BULLIED

Then do as I did...
MAIL THE COUPON BELOW

I gained 53 lbs. of mighty muscle
I added 6½ inches to my CHEST
3 inches to each ARM

And the rest in proportion —
ALL IN A FEW SHORT WEEKS
by using the JOWETT SYSTEM

for building Real HE-MEN

Come on, PAL, Now YOU give me
10 pleasant Minutes a Day
in your own home... and I'll
give YOU a NEW HE-MAN BODY
for your OLD SKELETON FRAME.

says GEORGE F. JOWETT
World's Greatest Builder of HE-MEN

NOT I DON'T care how skinny or flabby
you are. If you're a teen-ager, in
your 20's or 30's or over, if you're short
or tall or what you do. All I want is
JUST 10 EXERCISES in your home
a day. YOU OVER BY THE SAME METHOD
I turned myself from a weak to a
Champion of Champions.

YES! You'll see 100% upon 100%
of MIGHTY MUSCLE added to
YOUR BODY. YOUR CHEST becomes real
YOU BACK and SHOULDERS broad-
ened. Your head bent to bring your
eye SOULTY, SIZE, POWER, SPEED!
You'll become an ALL-AROUND, ALL-
AMERICAN HE-MAN, a WARRIOR in an-
anything you tackle or my Training
won't last you one solitary week!

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World's Greatest
Builder of Champions
"Champion of Champions"
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sands of readings.
In muscular power!
Packed with stories
of mighty men of
might and muscle
who started pennies
and the Jowett
adventures of Jowett
in strength that
inspired his pupils to
become men. They'd
show you the best
way to build and
muscle. Send for
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IN EVERY WALK OF LIFE



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Packed COUPONS in He-
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Gain Pounds, INCHES, FAST!

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Made a LIFETIME STUDY of
every way known to develop
your body. Then I discovered
THE BEST TO BUILD UP YOUR
RESERVE TO FEEL, MY "JOWETT
PROGRESSIVE POWER" the only
method that builds you a man
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CITY _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____



FEAR

HERE ARE TALES THAT WILL USHER YOU INTO
THE HAUNT OF



NO. 15
OCT



REPRINT
EDITION

FEAR

FEATURING



THE OLD MAN

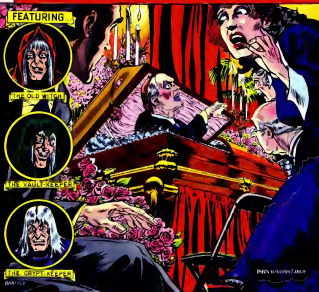


THE UNDERTAKER



THE GRUDGE KEEPER

WARREN



PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! CAN'T RESIST ME, EAT LOVE MY COOKING, EAT! WELL, COME ON INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR MAN, AND I'LL WHIP UP ANOTHER MAD-MAS-RECIPE IN MY CAULDRON! YEP! IT'S THE OLD WITCH, YOUR FREAKING RESEMBLANCE OF THE REVOLTING... YOUR MACABRE MENU-MAKER... YOUR SNIFFER-SNEF... GREEPS-COOKER... MADNESS-MIXER... SCREAM-STEWER... AND SO FORTH! SO FASTEN YOUR GHOO! CUPS FOR ANOTHER SERVING OF SNEER HORROR, AND I'LL BEGIN THE TASTY TALE I CALL...

CHATTER-BOXED!

IT WAS A BRISK DAY IN NOVEMBER, 1944! THE MAN LAY SPRAWLED ON THE COLD SIDEWALK WHERE HE HAD FALLEN! HIS FACE WAS ASHEN-WHITE... HIS LIPS, BLUE! THE CROWD AROUND HIM FORMED QUICKLY... ANXIOUS EYES PEERED DOWN AT HIM...

WHAT HAPPENED?

HE JUST FEELED OVER!

SOMEBODY GET AN AMBULANCE!

HE HE LOOKS DEAD!

SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, AN AMBULANCE, ITS SIREN SCREAMING, PULLED UP TO THE CURB BESIDE THE PROSTRATE FIGURE.

"ONE SIDE! LET ME THROUGH!"

"ALL RIGHT! BACK UP! GIVE HIM AIR!"

THE WHITE-COATED AMBULANCE DOCTOR KNELT OVER THE MAN LYING ON THE GRAY SIDEWALK. HE LISTENED WITH HIS STETHOSCOPE... FELT FOR A PULSE... THEN SHOOK HIS HEAD...

"THIS MAN IS DEAD!"

IT WAS AN HOUR LATER THAT EILEEN FILBURY FINALLY SAID GOOD-BYE TO HER FRIEND SADIE! THEY'D BEEN AT IT, TALKING, FOR EVEN LONGER THAN THAT! AS SOON AS SHE HUNG UP...

"HUNT ON, DEAR! ANOTHER CALL! AND I HAVE SO MUCH TO DO!"

"YES! THIS IS... WE'VE BEEN TRYING MRS. FILBURY! TO REACH YOU FOR AN HOUR. MRS. FILBURY! BUT! YOUR LINE WAS BUSY!"

"OH! I WAS CHATTING WITH A GIRL FRIEND! WHO IS THIS?"

"THIS IS THE MORGUE CALLING, MRS. FILBURY! YOU'D BETTER BRACE YOURSELF! THEY BROUGHT YOUR HUSBAND'S BODY IN HERE A WHILE AGO! HE'S... DEAD!"

A HUSH FELL OVER THE PEOPLE SEATED IN THE FUNERAL PARLOR'S CHAPEL! THE COFFIN LID WAS OPENED! THE VOICE OF THE ORATOR BEGAN TO DRONE! JACOB FILBURY'S FUNERAL SERVICES HAD BEGUN...

AND SO... IN FINAL PEACE... JACOB FILBURY'S REMAINS WILL BE LAID TO REST! BUT HE LEAVES BEHIND THE LOVE, THE DEVOTION, THE KINDNESS HE PRACTICED WHILE HE LIVED...

THE FUNERAL ORATOR'S VOICE DRONE ON AND ON, INTERRUPTED ONLY BY THE PITIFUL SONGS OF THE MOURNERS BEFORE HIM! SUDDENLY, A SHRIEK ECHOED THROUGH THE FUNERAL CHAPEL...

EEEEAAA!



SHEER HORROR GRIPPED THE MOURNING GATHERING! ALL EYES STARTED AT THE OPEN COFFIN! A WHITE VEINED HAND REACHED UP GRASPING THE COFFIN LID...

AND AS JACOB FILBURY SAT UP, THE CHAPEL WAS FILLED WITH CRIES OF TERROR! WOMEN MOURNERS JERPING ON THEIR BLACK DRESSES, SCRAMBLING FOR THE EXITS! MEN PUSHED AFTER THEM! A GIRL FELL, SCREAMING, AND THE OTHERS TRAMPLED OVER HER...

YAAAAAAAAAAAAAGGHHH!

SOME, ROOTED WITH MORTAL FEAR TO THE SPOT WHERE THEY STOOD, JUST STARED AT THE PALE FIGURE RISING IN HIS COFFIN! SUDDENLY, JACOB'S EYES BLINKED OPEN! COLOR RUSHED TO HIS CHEEKS! HE LOOKED AROUND...

THE DOCTOR STROKED HIS CHIN THOUGHTFULLY! JACOB FILBURY WUNG HIS HEAD...

WHA... WHAT'S GON' ON?

GOOD LORD!

HE'S ALIVE!

YOU SURFERED WHAT IS COMMONLY CALLED A CATALEPTIC FIT! MR. FILBURY! CATALEPTIC FITS CLOSELY RESEMBLE DEATH!

BUT DOCTOR! I MIGHT HAVE BEEN BURIED ALIVE!

DOCTOR! TELEPHONE! MRS. CONDIKIAN!

JACOB FILBURY'S FAMILY PHYSICIAN, DOCTOR HENLEY BENDISBERG, PICKED UP THE PHONE...

TEN MINUTES LATER...

GOOD-BYE, MRS. I WAS SAYING, CONDIKIAN! OR... I COULD'VE BEEN WHERE WERE I BURIED ALIVE! WE, FILBURY!

EXCUSE ME, FILBURY! OH, YES, MRS. CONDIKIAN! IS THAT SO? IS THAT SO? NO?! HMM! OH, DE AR! REALLY? WELL, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT YOU SHOULD DO! TAKE A POT AND BOIL UP...

YES! TELLING HOW LONG A CATALEPTIC FIT WILL LAST! AND IT IS RARE THAT A PHYSICIAN CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IT... AND ACTUAL DEATH! NOW...

TELEPHONE, DOCTOR! MRS. REREPPIUS!

OH, EXCUSE ME, FILBURY!

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...

YES, MRS. BEREFFUS? YOU DO THAT? YES? GOOD-BYE! ER...



IS IT POSSIBLE THAT I MAY HAVE MORE OF THESE ATTACKS, DOCTOR?

QUITE POSSIBLE, MR. FILBURY! WE MUST BE VERY CAREFUL TO SEE THAT WE AVOID WHAT ALMOST HAPPENED YESTERDAY! WE MUST...



TELEPHONE! DOCTOR? MRS. GREY!

OH! EXCUSE ME, ER... MR. FILBURY!



GOOD-BYE, DOCTOR?

JACOB FILBURY WAS FRIGHTENED... TERRIBLY FRIGHTENED! HE RUSHED TO HIS BROTHER'S HOUSE...

NOT HOME! HMMPH! HE'S NEVER HOME! ALWAYS OUT, GALLIVANTING! JUST WHEN I NEED HIM!



AS JACOB CAME IN THE FRONT DOOR OF HIS OWN HOME... NO, SAGIE! REALLY? HMMPH! ALWAYS YOU'RE KIDDING! SHE DID? OH, WAIT UNTIL MARY HEARS ABOUT THIS! SO ON TELL ME MORE!



SUDDENLY JACOB FILBURY'S FACE BRIGHTENED! HE GRINNED... OF COURSE! THAT'S IT! THAT'S THE WAY TO MAKE SURE I'M NOT BURIED ALIVE!



SAGIE! SERIOUSLY? OH, NO! FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! WELL, I'LL BE...

MR. FILBURY HURRIED TO THE UNDERTAKER! THE PLAN WAS FORMING IN HIS MIND... THE SOLUTION... SO YOU SEE, IF I DO HAVE A CATALEPTIC FIT, AND YOU DO BURY ME ALIVE... I'LL BE ABLE TO LET MY FAMILY KNOW! THEY'LL COME AND DIG ME UP!



ALL RIGHT, MR. FILBURY! WE'LL FOLLOW YOUR INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER.

THEN MR. FILBURY WENT TO HIS FAMILY DOCTOR AND TOLD HIM HIS PLAN...

EXCELLENT IDEA, FILBURY! IF YOU ARE SURVIVED ALIVE DURING YOUR CATALEPTIC FIT, YOU'LL CONSUME PRACTICALLY NONE OF THE AIR IN THE COFFIN! WHEN YOU COME OUT OF IT, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO LAST LONG ENOUGH...



TELEPHONE, ER DOCTOR?
THANKS, DOC! BYE!

FINALLY, MR. FILBURY COMPLETED HIS ARRANGEMENTS...

I'LL PAY MY BILLS IN ADVANCE, EVERY MONTH! SATISFACTORY?

FINE! WE'LL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING, MR! WOULD YOU LIKE TO PAY FOR DECEMBER NOW?



JACOB WENT OUT INTO THE CHILL NOVEMBER AIR FEELING CONFIDENT THAT HIS PROBLEM WAS SOLVED...



YES, SIRRE! PERFECT! PERFECT!

EARLY THE NEXT MONTH, IT HAPPENED! A CAR CAREENED CRAZILY ACROSS A DESERTED STREET AND SMASHED INTO A BRICK WALL! THE IMPACT OF TONS OF STEEL AND SHATTERING GLASS ECHOED INTO THE NIGHT.



WHEN THE AMBULANCE DOCTOR EXAMINED THE UNFORTUNATE DRIVER...



THIS MAN IS DEAD!

THAT'S JACOB FILBURY! I RECOGNIZE HIM!

DOCTOR BERNHARDT ASSURED MRS. FILBURY...

NO, MRS. FILBURY! HE'S DEAD ALL RIGHT! THE CRASH DID IT! IT'S DEFINITELY NOT A CATALEPTIC FIT!

THEN... SOB... I SUPPOSE WE... SOB... MIGHT BE WELL GO AHEAD... SOB... WITH THE FUNERAL!



THE UNDERTAKER, HOWEVER, INSISTED THAT HE FOLLOW MR. FILBURY'S INSTRUCTIONS...

THAT'S THE ARRANGEMENT, MRS. FILBURY! YOUR HUSBAND DEMANDED IT! I'M GOING TO SEE THAT IT'S CARRIED OUT! NO EMBALMING!

BUT REALLY, MR. BOXER! THE OTHER THING! ISN'T THAT A LITTLE RIDICULOUS? BURY JACOB WITH A CONNECTED TELEPHONE!



HEE, HEE! YEP, KIDDIES! THAT'S THE DEAL! THAT'S WHAT FOUR OLD JACOB FILBURY ARRANGED WITH THE UNDERTAKER AND THE TELEPHONE COMPANY... THAT HE BE BURIED WITHOUT BEING EMBALMED, ALONG WITH A CONNECTED TELEPHONE IN HIS COFFIN! NOW, NOW! LET'S NOT START GUESSING HOW MY LITTLE TALE ENDS! 'CAUSE! LET'S READ ON!

AND SO ON THAT GOLD SATURDAY IN EARLY OCTOBER, JACOB FILBURY'S COFFIN WAS LOWERED INTO THE GRAVE.

SOS... SOS...

SILENCE CLOSED IN AS THE MOURNERS LEFT AND THE GRAVE WAS COVERED OVER! THE THIN TELEPHONE WIRE COMING FROM THE FRESH MOUND OF CEMETERY EARTH SWAYED IN THE WINTRY WIND...



NIGHT DROPT OVER THE GRAY HEADSTONES LIKE A BLACK PHANTOM! ALL WAS STILL... EXCEPT FOR THE WHINE OF THE WIND STREAMING PAST THE WIRE! THEN CAME DAWN! TOWARDS AFTERNOON...

FOR JACOB FILBURY HAD HAD A CATALEPTIC FIT! HE'D SUFFERED IT WHILE DRIVING! THAT'S WHY HE CRASHED! BUT THE CRASH HADN'T KILLED HIM! HE WAS ALIVE... BURIED ALIVE!

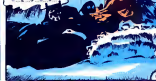


AND THEN JACOB FELT IT, BESIDE HIM! THE GOLD BLACK INSTRUMENT! THE TELEPHONE!



JACOB LIFTED THE RECEIVER! THE DIAL TONE BRAN TO HIM! HE COUNTED THE LITTLE HOLES CAREFULLY TO MAKE SURE HE'D DIAL THE RIGHT NUMBER.

MY WIFE, EILEEN! I'LL CALL HER! SHE'LL COME AND GET ME! LET'S SEE! THAT'S THE THIRD HOLE! THAT'S THE SEVENTH!



DARN! DARN! SO I'M A WOODEN MEDAL WITH LEATHER TRIMMINGS ON YOUR NOSE? SO YOU FIGURED THAT OUT, TOO? WELL, THE DOC WAS ON THE PHONE COMPLAINING ONE OF HIS COMPLAINTING PATIENTS...

HOME WHEN GASP
I NEED HIM! I
KNOW! GASP!
DOCTOR BENDMERE

BUST-BUST
BUST-BUST
BUST-BUST

"BUSY? I SHOULD GASP... SNOKE HAVE KNOWN WHAT'LL I DO?"
YES! THAT'S IT!
THAT'S IT..

WHAT'LL I DO?
YES? THAT'S IT
THAT'S IT...

100

BUT THE DIAL TONE DIDN'T COME! BECAUSE MINUTES BEFORE, THOUSANDS OF MILES WEST-WARD...

LOOK UP THERE!

PLANES! HUNDREDS OF THEM!

GOOD LORD!



NO, FRIENDS! THE DIAL TONE DIDN'T COME! BECAUSE AT THAT MOMENT, THE NATION'S PHONE CENTERS WERE TIED UP WITH ARMY, NAVY, AND NEWSPAPER CALLS! THE WIRES WERE JAMMED! ALL CIRCUITS WERE BUSY...

PLEASE... GASP... CHOK... NOT MUCH AIR... LEFT! OPERATOR! GASP... A DIAL TONE... SO I CAN... PLEASE... GASP... CHOK... GASP... DIAL THE OPERATOR... GURGLE...



"PLEASE HANG UP! THE JAPANESE HAVE JUST BOMBED PEARL HARBOR!"



DEAD... GASP! NO DIAL TONE! THE PHONE IS DEAD! OPERATOR... GASP... OPERATOR... CHOK...



IN FACT, THE JAP IN JACOB'S COFFIN RAVE OUT LONG BEFORE THE LITTLE GRANGE LIGHT ON THE TROUBLE-SWITCHBOARD INDICATED THAT A PHONE WAS OFF THE HOOK SOMEWHERE! SO THE SHRIIL VOICE OF THE OPERATOR FELL ON DEAF EARS IN THAT DARK UNDERGROUND HORIZONTAL PHONE BOOTH... FOR JACOB HAD SUFFOCATED...

THIS IS THE OPERATOR! I'M SORRY! OUR CIRCUITS ARE BUSY! PLEASE HANG UP...



HEL, HEL! YEP, KIDDIES! LIKE I SAID IN THE BEGINNING... IT WAS 1941! I THOUGHT YOU WERE PRETTY SURE! OH, I THOUGHT YOU HAD IT ALL FIGURED OUT! WELL, I HOPE I OUT-SMARTED YOU! AS FOR JACOB... WELL, HE AND HIS TELEPHONE ARE PRETTY DECAYED BY NOW! I STILL GET A CALL FROM HIM ONCE IN A WHILE, THOUGH!

USUALLY, I'M NOT HOME... SO HE LEAVES A SPOT-MESSAGE! AND NOW, THE FAULT-KEEPER ARRIVES WITH HIS LITTLE NUMBER! DID YOU LATER! GOT ANOTHER BURNING SALE FOR YOU! BYE, NOW!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

REMEMBER THE STORY ABOUT THE THREE HOLES IN THE GROUND CALLED 'WELL, WELL, WELL'? HEH, HEH! NOW, YOUR PAULP-KEEPER BELIEVES IN DEFLATION! SO COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, SIT YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT BUCKET, AND I'LL BEGIN THE TALE OF ONE HOLE IN THE GROUND CALLED...

all Washed Up!



IT WAS AN OLD WELL! NO ONE USED IT ANYMORE! THE WATER DEEP BELOW ITS SLIMY-WALLED SIDES SHIMMERED IN THE MOONLIGHT! A MUSTY DOOR OF STAGNATION AND STALENESS DRIFTED UP FROM THE BLACKNESS BENEATH ITS STONE RIM! THE MOSS-LADEN WATER BUCKET HUNG SILENTLY ON THE FRAYED ROPE COILED ABOUT THE WEATHERBEATEN HANDLE! INSECTS SWARMED BENEATH THE ROTTED BRID THAT STOOD OVER IT! A TWIG SNAPPED HEARILY! A FIGURE MOVED OUT OF THE DARKNESS...TOWARD THE WELL! A WOMAN...



SHE CAME UP TO THE WELL AND LEANED OVER IT! THE MOONLIGHT GLISTENED ON HER TEAR-STAINED CHEEKS! SHE LOOKED DOWN AT THE STAGNANT WATER FAR BELOW...

HOW LONG CAN WE GO ON LIKE THIS, HARRY? PEOPLE ARE TALKING! THEY SAY BOB, THEY SAY YOU DON'T INTEND TO MARRY ME!

A SECOND FIGURE CAME OUT OF THE SHADOWS AND MOVED TO THE SIDE OF THE UNHAPPY WOMAN! A MAN...

THEY'RE WRONG, MARGIA! I WANT TO MARRY YOU! BUT I CAN'T! NOT YET! I'M NOT READY!

WHEN, HARRY? WHEN WILL YOU BE READY?

AS SOON AS I'VE SAVED UP ENOUGH MONEY! I'VE GOT A JOB NOW! IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE I GET A PROMOTION! THEN...

YOU'VE PUT IT OFF AND PUT IT OFF! ALWAYS THE SAME EXCUSE! YOU HAVEN'T THE MONEY!

IT ISN'T AN EXCUSE, MARGIA! CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

I UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING, HARRY! PERFECTLY! I'M SORRY YOU NEVER GAVE ME A RING! I WOULD GIVE IT BACK... NOW!

MARGIA!

WE'RE FINISHED, HARRY! I'M TIRED OF WAITING! BOBBO CALLED ME TODAY! HE'S BACK IN TOWN! HE WANTS TO SEE ME! HE WANTS TO KNOW IF I'M... FREE... OF TIES! I'M GOING TO TELL HIM... YES!

MARGIA! COME BACK! WAIT!

GOOD-BYE, HARRY! I'LL SEE YOU AROUND...

THE WOMAN DISAPPEARED INTO THE GLOOM! THE MAN STOOD... STARING INTO THE BLACKNESS WHERE SHE'D VANISHED! THE SILENCE CLOSED IN AGAIN! A BREEZE STIRRED THE WELL SUCKET! THE PRAYED ROPE CREAKED...

BOBBO SANDERS! THAT RICH NO- GOOD (B...?) HE ALWAYS WANTED MARGIA! NOW HE'S GOING TO TAKE HER AWAY FROM ME!

MARCIA'S LAUGHTER RIPPLED THROUGH THE STILL NIGHT AIR! GREGG TOOK HER IN HIS ARMS...



GREGG: THESE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE BEEN WONDERFUL! I JUST WONDERFUL! I'VE LOVED EVERY MINUTE OF IT!

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO END, MARCIA! IT COULD GO ON AND ON... LIKE THIS... IF YOU'LL SAY YES!

MARCIA TURNED AWAY, STARING DOWN AT THE SHIMMERING WELL-WATER FAR BELOW...



ARE... ARE YOU PROPOSING TO ME, GREGG?

YES, MARCIA! I'M ASKING YOU TO MARRY ME! WHAT DO YOU SAY?



I'M NOT SURE I LOVE YOU, GREGG!

I'LL MAKE YOU LOVE ME, DEAREST! JUST GIVE ME THE CHANCE! SAY YOU'LL MARRY ME!



YES, GREGG! I'LL... I'LL MARRY YOU!

SWEET-HEART!



HARRY GLENCHED HIS FISTS AND SWORE SILENTLY AS HE WATCHED FROM HIS HIDING PLACE...

I WON'T LET YOU HAVE HER, GREGG! I WON'T! SHE'S MINE! MINE!

MARCIA PULLED AWAY FROM GREGG! SHE SMILED...



I'VE GOT TO GO IN NOW, GREGG! IT'S LATE! CALL ME TOMORROW!

I WILL, HONEY! GOOD-NIGHT!

AFTER MARCIA WENT OFF DOWN THE PATH TOWARD HER HOUSE, GREGG LEANED OVER THE WELL AND GRINNED! HE WAS TOO BUSY WITH HIS OWN THOUGHTS TO HEAR THE CRACKLE OF THE LEAVES BEHIND HIM.



HARRY BROUGHT THE ROOM DOWN ON GRESS'S HEAD AGAIN AND AGAIN! SOON IT FELT AS IF HE WERE POUNDING AN OLD WOTH-EATEN PILLOW.



HARRY KNELT AND SLIPPED THE RING FROM GRESS'S FINGER...



THERE WAS A SECOND OR TWO OF SILENCE, AND THEN A MUFFLED SPLASH FAR BELOW! HARRY PEERED DOWN AT THE RIPPLING MURKY WATER! SUDDENLY...



HARRY STARED DOWN AT GRESS'S LIFELESS BODY LYING BEFORE HIM! THEN, SOMETHING CAUGHT HIS EYE! SOMETHING SPARKLING...



HARRY PUSHED THE RING INTO HIS BREAST POCKET AND LIFTED GRESS'S BODY...

NOW TO GET RID OF YOU, GRESS! WHERE THEY'D NEVER THINK OF LOOKING FOR YOU...



HARRY PUSHED GRESS'S BODY OVER THE STONE RIM OF THE WELL! FOR A MOMENT, IT HUNG THERE... PRECARIOUSLY...



THE RING SPINNED DOWNWARD CRAZILY! HARRY LUNGED FOR IT, ALMOST GOING OVER! IT WAS TOO LATE.



A LIGHT FLICKED ON IN MARGIA'S HOUSE! A WINDOW RATTLED OPEN! HARRY DUCKED INTO THE SHADOWS.



SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, HARRY BLOWED DOWN TO A WALK, BREATHING HEAVILY! HE'D GOTTEN OUT OF THERE... FAST...



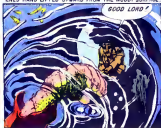
A WEEK PASSED! EACH NIGHT UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS, HARRY WOULD RETURN TO THE WELL WITH SOME STRING AND FISH HOOKS! HOUR AFTER HOUR, HE'D DANGLE THE HOOKS INTO THE MURKY WATER.



SEVERAL TIMES DURING THOSE NIGHTS OF FISHING, THE HOOKS WOULD CATCH ONTO THE FOOT BELOW, AND HARRY WOULD BE FORCED TO SNAP THE STRING AND BEGIN AGAIN...



ONCE, HARRY PULLED HARD, AND A BLOATED WHITE-EYED HAND LIFTED UPWARD FROM THE MURKY SURFACE.



DURING THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED THE MURDER, HARRY WOULD VISIT MARGIA... TO COMFORT HER.

HE NEVER *INTENDED* TO MARRY YOU, MARGIA! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT NOW?



2... SOB... SUPPOSE YOU'RE *RIGHT*... SOB, HARRY!

AND AS THE WEEKS WENT BY...

OH, HARRY! I'VE BEEN SUCH A FOOL! CAN YOU FORGIVE ME?



FORGET ABOUT HIM, MARGIA! IT'S ALL OVER! LET'S PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF!

MEANWHILE, HARRY CONTINUED TO FISH FOR GREGG'S RING WITH NO SUCCESS...

IT'S NO USE! THERE'S JUST ONE ALTERNATIVE...



AND SO, ABOUT TWO MONTHS AFTER THE MURDER... ONE DARK NIGHT, HARRY CAME TO THE WELL WITH A COIL OF STRONG ROPE.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY! I'VE GOT TO GO DOWN THERE AND GET IT!



HARRY SLID THE ROPE AROUND ONE OF THE BEAMS THAT SUPPORTED THE WELL SHED AND TIED IT SECURELY.



THEN HE SLIPPED OVER THE STONE RIM OF THE WELL AND BEGAN TO LOWER HIMSELF, HAND UNDER HAND, DOWN INTO THE DARK MUSTY SHAFT.



PHEW! WHAT A SMELL!

THE STENCH OF THE STAGNANT WATER BELOW SCARED HARRY'S NOSTRILS! SOON HE REACHED ITS MURKY SURFACE.



I HOPE IT'S NOT TOO DEEP!

THE WATER ROSE SLOWLY! IT HAD REACHED HARRY'S CHEST WHEN HIS FEET TOUCHED SOMETHING SOFT.



I... I'M STANDING ON THE BODY!

HARRY TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND DUCKED BELOW THE SURFACE! HE REACHED DOWNWARD FOR THE RING...



IT MUST BE HERE... SOMEWHERE...

MARCIA SAT BOLT UPRIGHT IN HER BED AS THE HYSTERICAL SHRIEKING ECHOED THROUGH THE STILLNESS OF THE NIGHT...



WHAT...
WHAT'S
THAT?

SHE SLIPPED ON A ROPE, HURRIED DOWNSTAIRS AND OUT INTO THE DARKNESS.



IT...IT'S COMING FROM
THE WELL!

THE SPLASHING AND SCREAMING WERE INDEED COMING FROM THE WELL! MARCIA PEERED OVER THE EDGE! FAR BELOW, HARRY WAS TRYING TO PULL HIMSELF UPWARD...



HARRY! HELP ME, MARCIA! PULL!
PULL! HE'S... HE'S... HE'S
TRYING TO DRAG
ME UNDER!

THE ROTTED, SWOLLEN, WHITENED, GRIMING THING HAD CLOSED ITS TEETH AROUND HARRY'S ANKLE! IT HELD IT IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP! TRICKLES OF BLOOD RAN FROM THE WOUNDS IT HAD MADE.



PULL... MARCIA! PULL!
OH, LORD... THE ROPE...

HARRY!
HARRY...
IT'S
GREGG!

MARCIA BEGAN TO PULL WITH ALL HER STRENGTH! HARRY CONTINUED TO SHRIEK! LITTLE BY LITTLE HE CAME OUT OF THE WATER! AND THEN SHE SAW IT...



GOOD
LORD!

AND AS THE ROPE SNAPPED UNDER THE STRAIN, THE TWO OF THEM DISAPPEARED INTO THE DARK MURKY WATER! MARCIA STARED IN HORROR AS THE LAST FEW BUBBLES ROSE... AND BROKE ACROSS THE STAGNANT SURFACE...



HEW, HEW! AND THAT'S MY LITTLE YARN FOR THIS TIME, KIDDIES! HARRY AND GREGG ENDED UP IN THE DRINK... TOGETHER! WELL-WATER YUH GONNA DO? AS FOR MARCIA... SHE WAS LEFT HIGH AND DRY! BY THE WAY... BEFORE YOU GO ON TO THE OLD WITCH'S NIGHT, LET ME OFFER YOU A COOL, REFRESHING, THIRST -



QUENCHER!
THAT IS IF
YOU HOLD
YOUR NOSE!
BYE, NOW!

THE OLD WITCH'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!



HEE, HEE! IN VAULT OF HORROR NO. 87, I TOLD YOU **BLOOD-THIRSTY LITTLE FIEEND** A STORY I CALLED, 'A GRIM FAIRY TALE!' MY IDIOT EDITORS WENT SO WILD OVER THAT ONE (THEY'RE BOTH IN GAGES, NOW!), I'VE DECIDED TO TELL YOU **ANOTHER!** I CALL THIS LITTLE CHILDISH CHILLER...

MARRIAGE VOWS!

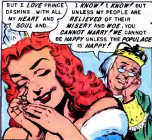
ONCE UPON A TIME... LONG, LONG AGO... THERE LIVED IN A TINY KINGDOM A **KIND-HEARTED KING** AND HIS BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER... **PRINCESS BUTTERCUP!** NOW PRINCESS BUTTERCUP WAS **HEADLY IN LOVE** WITH A HANDSOME **PRINCE** FROM A **DISTANT KINGDOM**... BUT WHEN SHE ASKED HER FATHER IF SHE COULD **MARRY** HIM, HER **KIND-HEARTED FATHER** REPLIED...



BUT FATHER, DEAR! I LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY **HEART AND SOUL...** AND **FINGERS...** AND **TOES!**

I KNOW, BUTTERCUP DEAR! BUT OUR PEOPLE ARE **STARVING!** OUR KINGDOM IS **POOR!** A **ROYAL MARRIAGE** AT THIS TIME WOULD BE **IMPOSSIBLE!** YOU SEE... I'M **AFRAID!**





BUT I LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL AND...

I KNOW! I KNOW! BUT UNLESS MY PEOPLE ARE RELIEVED OF THEIR MISERY AND WOE, YOU CANNOT MARRY! WE CANNOT BE HAPPY UNLESS THE POPULACE IS HAPPY!

CAN YOU HIRE JESTERS TO GO AROUND AND MAKE THE PEOPLE HAPPY, FATHER? AFTER ALL, I DO LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY HEART AND...

I CAN'T, BUTTERCUP! THE ROYAL TREASURY IS EMPTY... CLEAN... BUSTED... FLAT!



CAN'T YOU BORROW MONEY, FATHER? I DO LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY...

NEVER! THE ONLY ONE THAT I COULD BORROW MONEY FROM IS KING BLACKHEART... OUR BLACK-HEARTED NEIGHBOR...

UGH! HIM I HATE!

YOU GET THE PICTURE, BUTTERCUP!



AND SO, BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS BUTTERCUP COULD NOT MARRY HAPPOUSOME PRINCE DASHING! AT LEAST NOT UNTIL THE PEOPLE OF HER FATHER'S KINGDOM WERE BETTER OFF AND HAPPY! BUT THE LONGER SHE WAITED, THE WORSE THINGS GOT! THE PEOPLE GOT UNHAPPY... AND UNHAPPY AND UNHAPPY... SO...



SO... FATHER! WHAT WILL I DO? I HAVE WAITED... AND WAITED! THE PEOPLE HAVE GOTTEN UNHAPPY AND UNHAPPY! AND I DO LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL OF MY HEART AND SOUL... AND FINGERS... AND TOES!

THIS IS NO LONGER A QUESTION OF YOUR HAPPINESS. MY CHILD! OUR KINGDOM IS IN A CRISIS! IT IS THE PEOPLE I AM THINKING ABOUT!

THE PEOPLE? BUT WHAT ABOUT POOR LITTLE ME... AND PRINCE DASHING... WHOM I LOVE WITH ALL OF MY HEART AND SOUL...

THE PEOPLE COME FIRST, MY CHILD! IT IS THEIR HAPPINESS YOU MUST BE CONCERNED ABOUT! AFTER THEY ARE HAPPY, THEN YOU CAN BE HAPPY! BUT NOW... THEY STARVE! THEY WALK THE STREETS IN RAGS...



FINALLY THE KIND-HEARTED KING COULD STAND IT NO LONGER! THINGS WERE WORSE THAN EVER! SO ONE DAY...

DAUGHTER, DAD! I'VE DECIDED TO SWALLOW MY PRIDE! I'VE DECIDED TO ASK OUR BLACK-HEARTED NEIGHBOR, KING BLACKHEART, FOR A LOAN!

OH, DADDY! THEN MAYBE I CAN MARRY PRINCE DASHING, WHOM I LOVE WITH...



THE DAUGHTER! IF I'M ABLE TO BORROW ENOUGH, AND MY PEOPLE ARE HAPPY, THEN YOU COULD MARRY... ER... WHAT'S HIS NAME?

PRINCE DASHING... WHOM I LOVE WITH ALL OF MY HEART AND SOUL AND...



SO... KIND-HEARTED KING KINDHEART AND HIS BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER, PRINCESS BUTTERCUP, WENT TO THE NEIGHBORING KINGDOM TO SEE BLACK-HEARTED KING BLACKHEART! NOW, KING BLACKHEART HAD NEVER MET PRINCESS BUTTERCUP! HE NEVER KNEW HIS NEIGHBOR HAD SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER! SO...



DO YOU NEED MONEY, EH, KING KINDHEART? WELL, I THINK A LOAN COULD BE ARRANGED!

YOU DO? OH, DADDY?

...ON ONE CONDITION, OF COURSE!

EH? ONE CONDITION?

ANYTHING! ANYTHING!



MY CONDITION, KING KINDHEART, IS THAT YOU GIVE ME YOUR DAUGHTER'S HAND IN MARRIAGE!

WHAT? BUT SHE LOVES ANOTHER!

NO! NO!

HER, HER? EITHER THAT YOUR DAUGHTER'S HAND... OR NO LOAN.

NEVER! NEVER!

CAN I SPEAK TO MY DAUGHTER FOR A MINUTE ALONE?



NEVERTHELESS, I MUST OBTAIN THE
LOAN! I'M CONCERNED ABOUT OUR
PEOPLE! I MUST CONSENT TO GIVE
KING BLACKEART YOUR HAND IN
MARRIAGE!



BOB: BO-BO!
 BOB: NOW, NOW,
 PRETTY
 BUTTERCUP!
 DO NOT BE
 LONELY!!



SO, KIND-HEARTED KING KINDHEART AND HIS BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER, PRINCESS BUTTERCUP, RETURNED TO THEIR OWN KINGDOM.

YOU MUST BE BRAVE.
BUTTERCUP! YOU MUST THINK
OF OUR PEOPLE! REMEMBER!
THEIR HAPPINESS COMES FIRST!



NEWS OF THE COMING ROYAL MARRIAGE WAS ANNOUNCED THROUGHOUT KING-HEARTED KING KINDHEART'S KINGDOM...

HEAR YE...HEAR YE! BE IT KNOWN THAT ON TUESDAY, AUGUST FIFTH, GOOD KING BLACKHEART WILL TAKE OUR BELOVED PRINCESS BUTTERCUP'S HAND IN MARRIAGE!

BUT...

BUT WE THOUGHT PRINCESS BUTTERCUP LOVED PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL HER HEART AND SOUL... AND FINGERS... AND TOES!

PLEASE! THERE'S MORE! HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

... AND BE IT KNOWN THAT ON THAT DAY EACH AND EVERY CITIZEN WILL RECEIVE A MEDIUM-SIZED BAG OF GOLD... IN CELEBRATION! GOLD, COURTESY OF LOAN BY KING BLACKHEART!

AH! CRAFTY THAT! THE DEVIL, THAT KING BLACKHEART!

DAYS PASSED! A WEEK WENT BY! PRINCESS BUTTERCUP REMAINED IN HER ROOM, CRYING HER EYES OUT.

SOB... SOB!

COME, MY CHILD! SEE HOW HAPPY OUR PEOPLE ARE! SEE HOW HAPPY YOU HAVE MADE THEM!

SEE HOW UNHAPPY I AM, SOO... FATHER!

I KNOW, DAUGHTER! I KNOW! BUT WHAT CAN I DO?

THE WEDDING DATE DREW NEAR! THEN, ON THE EVE OF THE ROYAL MARRIAGE DAY...

I HAVE IT! I HAVE IT! A WAY OUT, FATHER!

TELL ME, DAUGHTER! TELL ME!

THE NEXT DAY, THE WEDDING DAY... STEEPLE BELLS TOLLED! PEOPLE DANCED IN THE STREETS! SOON, KING BLACKHEART'S COACH APPEARED...

HERE HE COMES!

ONE SIDE!

LOOK! BAGS OF GOLD!



THE BAGS OF GOLD WERE DISTRIBUTED TO THE POPULACE...

THERE' THE LAST ONE! NOW, LET'S GET ON WITH THE CEREMONY, KING KINDEART!



KING BLACKHEART LED KING BLACKHEART INTO THE CASTLE...

THIS WAY, KING BLACKHEART!



NO TRICKS, KING KINDEART! I'VE KEPT MY PART OF THE BARGAIN!



...DOWN A LONG DARK CORRIDOR...

AND I WILL KEEP MY PART, KING BLACKHEART! A BARGAIN IS A BARGAIN! IN HERE!



AM! THE CHAPEL!

THE CHAPEL WAS FILLED WITH ROYAL GUESTS! NEAR THE ALTAR STOOD PRINCESS BUTTERCUP! AT HER SIDE STOOD PRINCE DASHING...

WHAT'S THIS, KING KINDEART? I AM TO HAVE YOUR DAUGHTER'S HAND IN MARRIAGE... NOT HIM!



THAT'S RIGHT, KING BLACKHEART! THERE'S TO BE A DOUBLE CEREMONY TODAY!



PRINCE DASHING WILL MARRY BUTTERCUP...



WHAT? BUT...



KING KINDEART EXTENDED A VELVET PILLOW! KING BLACKHEART STARED AT IT IN SHEER HORROR...

...AND NOW... YOU WILL HAVE MY DAUGHTER'S HAND IN MARRIAGE!



GOOD LORD!



HEE, HEE! YOU! THEY MADE THE OLD BOKING KING BLACKHEART, SO THROUGH WITH IT TOO, KIDDIES! AND AFTER THAT, EVERYBODY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER... PRINCE DASHING WITH ONE-ARMED PRINCESS BUTTERCUP... AND BLACK-HEARTED KING BLACKHEART WITH HIS HANDY WIFE!



HEE, HEE! AND THAT'S MY FAIRY TALE FOR THIS ISSUE! BARRY THAT'S WHAT I TOLD YOU! BYE, NOW!

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HMMH! FAIRY TALES! WHAT NEXT? PRETTY SOON THAT OLD HAG WILL BE TELLIN' "FUNNY-LITTLE-ANIMATED HORROR STORIES! WELL, NOT ME! I'M FROM THE OLD SCHOOL! STRAIGHT GORE... THAT'S MY LORE!" YEP! IT'S YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO DIG UP ANOTHER TALE OF TERROR FROM MY COLLECTION! SO SIT DOWN ON THAT SAMPLE-CASE, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURDLER I CALL...

DEATH OF SOME SALESMEN!



YOUR NAME IS STUART FRATHERS? YOU'RE A SALESMAN... A TRAVELING SALESMAN! FOR TWO YEARS NOW YOU'VE BEEN CRUISE THESE BAGS-AND-WOODS ROADS, HUSTLING YOUR LIFE! YOU GO FROM FARMHOUSE TO FARMHOUSE, MAKING YOUR PITCH? SOMETIMES YOU HAVE A SALE... MOSTLY NOT! TODAY LOOKS LIKE ONE OF YOUR BAD DAYS...

NO! NO, I SAID!
NOW GO AWAY!

WELL, THANKS
ANYWAY! I'LL
DROP BY AGAIN!

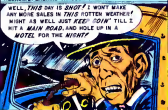


SOME OF THESE BACKWOODS ROADS ARE **SMOOTH**. SOME ARE **PRETTY BAD**! LIKE THE ONE YOU'RE ON NOW! IT'S **MUDDY** AND **BUTTED**! YOUR BEAT-UP OLD CAR ROCKS AND ROLLS! THE SKY ABOVE YOU IS **BLEAK** AND **GREY**! YOU CURSE SOFTLY TO YOURSELF.



LOOKS LIKE **RAIN**, **DRAST IT**! AND HERE I AM IN THE MIDDLE OF **NOWHERE**!

AND THEN IT STARTS COMING DOWN! THE RAIN! IT FLOODS ACROSS YOUR WINDSHIELD...PATTERING LOUDLY ON THE CAR ROOF! YOU CAN HARDLY SEE THE ROAD AHEAD! THE RUTS AND HOLLOWES FILL WITH WATER! YOU BOUNCE ALONG...SPLASHING THROUGH THEM.



WELL, **THIS DAY IS SHOT**! I WON'T MAKE ANY MORE SALES IN **THIS ROTTEN WEATHER**! MIGHT AS WELL JUST **KEE' GOIN'** TILL I HIT A **MAIN ROAD**, AND HOLE UP IN A **MOTEL** FOR THE NIGHT!

THE RAIN CONTINUES! SUDDENLY YOUR CAR SAGS AWARDWARD TO THE RIGHT! THE ENGINE COUGHS AND STALLS! YOU'RE OVER YOUR WHEEL HERE IN A **PUDGLE**...



OH-KAY! STUCK!
NOW WHAT?

YOU SIT THERE, IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT RAIN-FLOODED MUDDY BACKWOODS ROAD, COUNTING TO TEN! THEN YOU LOOK AROUND...



MUST BE A FARMHOUSE SOMEWHERE NEAR HERE! MAYBE THEY CAN PUT ME UP!

YOU PEER THROUGH THE BLOOMY DOWNPOUR! THEN YOU SEE IT! **THE HOUSE**! IT STANDS BLACK AND SOMBER, OUTLINED AGAINST THE GREY SKY...



HEY! WHAT LUCK!
THERE'S A HOUSE...UP ON THAT HILL! I'LL MAKE A **BREAK** FOR IT!

YOU LEAP FROM YOUR STALLED AUTO AND START FOR THE HOUSE! THE RAINDROPS SLAM AGAINST YOUR FACE! YOUR CLOTHES BEGIN TO SOAK UP THE WETNESS! YOU SPLASH THROUGH THE RAIN-SWELLED PUDGLES.



HOPE THEY'VE GOT A PHONE SO I CAN CALL IN FOR A **TOW**!

AND THEN YOU'RE ON THE PORCH! THE HOUSE IS OLD AND WEATHERBEATEN! THE SHUTTERS ARE BROKEN AND HANG CRAZILY FROM RUSTED HINGES! THE BLINDS ARE CRANNY! THERE'S NO SIGN OF LIFE! BEHIND YOU, THE RAIN POURS NOISILY OFF THE PORCH ROOF.



LOOKS DESERTED! WELL, I'LL **HOCK** ANYWAY.

YOU FOUND YOUR FIST ON THE FLimsY DOOR! THE SOUND ECHOES THROUGH THE HOUSE! FOR A MOMENT ALL IS STILL SAVE FOR THE RAINDROPS! THEN HEAVY FOOTSTEPS APPROACH! THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN...

YES? HELLO! I WONDER IF YOU CAN HELP ME? I'M A TRAVELING SALESMAN AND MY CAR...



THE OLD WOMAN WHO HAS ANSWERED THE DOOR GRINS! SHE STEPS BACK, HER FACE BEAMING.

A SALESMAN! COME IN! COME IN!

MY CAR STALLED DOWN ON THE ROAD! THE WHEELS MUST HAVE GOTTEN WET!



THE OLD WOMAN CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND YOU AND CALLS...

ESAN! IT'S A SALESMAN!

I'LL BE RIGHT THERE, HENRIETTA!

I WONDER IF YOU PEOPLE HAVE A PHONE?



AN OLD MAN COMES INTO THE ROOM, SMILING WARMLY.

PHONE? PHONE? NO PHONE! SALESMAN, EH?

OH, THAT'S TOO BAD! I THOUGHT I MIGHT CALL IN FOR A TOW! I'M STUCK... DOWN AT THE ROAD!

CAN WE OFFER YOU ANYTHING, MR...MR...



YOU FOLLOW THE NICE OLD COUPLE INTO THEIR KITCHEN! YOU LOOK AROUND AND GASP! YOU'RE AMAZED! THAT OLD HOUSE WITH SUCH MODERN APPLIANCES...

WIT! YOU CERTAINLY HAVE ALL THE LATEST CONVENIENCES, FOLKS!

OH, YES! YOU SEE, WE'VE HAD SALESMEN VISIT US BEFORE!

TELL 'EM 'BOUT THE FIRST ONE, HENRIETTA! THE ONE THAT SOLD US THE REFRIGERATOR!



THE OLD WOMAN'S FACE DARKENS! SHE STARES AT YOU WHISPERING HOARSELY...

OH, YES! THE REFRIGERATOR! ESAN AND I'D SAVED FOR YEARS. MR. THATCHER! PUT BANY EVERY CENT WE COULD MANAGE! WE'D ALWAYS WANTED ONE! THEN THAT SALESMAN CAME. THE ONE THAT SOLD US THAT ONE!

THE DIRTY NO GOOD CROOK!



YOU SHIFT UNCOMFORTABLY IN YOUR SEAT, STUART THATCHER! THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THIS OLD GUY, BUT YOU CAN'T PUT YOUR FINGER ON IT...

GROOK! IT DIDN'T WORK, MR. THATCHER! THE REFRIGERATOR DIDN'T WORK! HE CHEATED US! TOOK OUR LIVES' SAVINGS!



THAT'S TOO BAD! I'M SORRY!

...THAT'S WHY FROM THEN ON... WE VOWED THAT IF ANY OTHER SALESMAN TRIED TO SELL US ANYTHING...



...WE'D MAKE SURE IT WORKED FIRST!

THAT'S WISE!

TELL 'EM ABOUT THE FREEZER, EBAN!



EBAN POINTS TO THE LARGE FROZEN-FOOD LOCKER STANDING NEXT TO THE REFRIGERATOR.

WHEN HE CAME... THE ONE SELLING THE FREEZER... WE MADE SURE IT WORKED!

SHOW 'EM, EBAN!



YOU LOOK AROUND, FRANTICALLY! THESE PEOPLE ARE MAD! EBAN PATS THE NEW ELECTRIC STOVE...

FELLER THAT CAME WITH THIS WAS REAL NICE! BUT THAT FIRST COOK WAS NICE ALSO! CAN'T FROST 'EM JUS' 'CAUSE THEY'RE NICE! TRIED THE STOVE OUT, TOO!

OPEN THE OVEN DOOR, MR. THATCHER!



EBAN FLINGS OPEN THE FREEZER LID! YOU LOOK DOWN! SUDDENLY, YOUR HEART STOPS! A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWEEPS OVER YOU! INSIDE THAT LOCKER IS A FROST-COVERED BLUE-SKINNED BODY...

GOOD LORD!

MADE SURE, ALL RIGHT! TRIED IT OUT ON HIM... THE SALESMAN!

WORKED GOOD! SEE?



YOU PULL DOWN THE OVEN DOOR... JUST A CRACK! YOU STEP BACK HORRIFIED! THE DOOR FALLS OPEN ALL THE WAY! INSIDE IS A BROWN-GAUSTED WELL-ROASTED CORPSE...

STOVE WORKED GOOD, TOO! SEE!

DON'T GET ANY IDEAS ABOUT *JOHNNY*, MR. THATCHER! THIS SHOT-GUN'S LOADED...











The Old Witch

**F
E
A
R**

THE HAUNT OF FEAR[®]



NO.16
DEC.

REPRINT
EDITION

FEATURING...



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPTOGRAPHER

IN THIS ISSUE:

**E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY
RAY BRADBURY
AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!**



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HELLO! SO YOU MANAGED TO SCRATCH UP ANOTHER DIME FOR YOUR COPY OF MY MAD MENU FROM THE HAUNT OF FEAR? WELL, I'VE COOKED UP A RATHER REVOLUTIONARY RECIPE I'M SURE YOU'LL RECTOR OVER... NO COME ON! THIS IS THE OLD WITCH, STIRRING UP HER GRUDDY CAULDRON, READY TO DISH OUT ANOTHER TASTY TALE OF TERROR! HERE GOES WITH THE BLIND-SERVING I CALL...

NOBODY THERE!

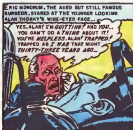


THE THROBBING SOUND FILLED THE LABORATORY, BANGING AWAY LIKE THE AMPLIFIED BEAT OF A PULSATING HEART! THE OLD MAN STOOD WITH HIS ARMS FOLDED, A LOOK OF DEFIANCE ON HIS AGED WRINKLED FACE! HE LOOKED DOWN AT THE YOUNGER MAN...

2ND "WHAT, WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE FORGOTTEN?"

THAT'S WHAT I SAID, ALAN! I'M FINISHED! I WON'T HAVE ANY MORE TO DO WITH THIS... THIS EVIL!





ERIC MONOGRAM, THE AGED BUT STILL FAMED SURGEON, STARED AT THE YOUNGER LOOKING ALAN THORNTON'S WIDE-EYED FACE...

YES, ALAN! I'M GOOT TIME! AND YOU... YOU CAN'T DO A PRIME ABOUT IT! YOU'RE HELPLESS, ALAN! TRAPPED! TRAPPED AS I WAS THAT NIGHT THIRTY-THREE YEARS AGO...



"REMEMBER, ALAN? REMEMBER THAT NIGHT? I WAS TWENTY-NINE, THEN I WAS YOUNG AND FOOLISH, AND YOU CANTALIZED ON IT? YOU WAITED OUTSIDE HER DOOR UNTIL I CAME OUT..."

GOOD-NIGHT, ERIC, DARLING! WILL I SEE YOU TOMORROW NIGHT?

IF I CAN GET AWAY, LOUISE/GOOD-NIGHT!



"I LOOKED UP AND DOWN THE HALL... BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO BE SEEN! I NEVER KNEW YOU WERE WATCHING..."

KIDS ME, ERIC! JUST ONCE MORE...

MOON-LOUSE! SOMEONE CAN SEE US!



"YES, ALAN? I DIDN'T WANT TO BE SEEN? YOU KNEW THAT, DIDN'T YOU? YOU KNEW YOU'D BE ABLE TO BLACKMAIL ME..."

HELLO... DOCTOR MONOGRAM!

WOOPS! I'M SORRY! YOU'VE MADE A MISTAKE! I'M NOT...



C'MON, DOCTOR! I'D KNOW YOU ANYWHERE! NOUSE PRETENDING WHERE CAN WE GO? I WANT TO TALK TO YOU!

I DON'T KNOW HOW! WHAT WOULD WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT?



WHY... WE COULD TALK ABOUT YOUR WIFE, DON'T WE COULD TALK ABOUT WHAT SHE WOULD DO IF SHE FOUND OUT ABOUT LOUISE IS THERE!

WHAT DO YOU WANT? MONOGRAM? IS THIS BLACKMAIL?



"AND THEN, ALAN, I NOTICED HOW YOU LIMPED AS YOU WALKED! REMEMBER, ALAN? REMEMBER YOUR CLUB-FOOT?"

I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU, DON'T I? I'VE FOLLOWED YOUR FASCINATING CAREER CAREFULLY! GRADUATED MED SCHOOL AT TWENTY-TWO, MARRIED A RICH SOCIETY DEBUTANTE, AND NOW, A FAMOUS SURGEON!

HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT? NAME YOUR PRICE!

'SMATTER...DOO! SCARED?
BOARDED THAT A SCANDAL
MIGHT MUD YOUR REPUTA-
TION? YOU LIKE THOSE
HIGH FEES YOUR PAAT
AVENUE PATIENTS FOUR
DOOZ-ENT? YOUR WIFE
FOUND OUT ABOUT LOOZES.
YOU'D BE PISSED OUT OF
THE BLUE-NOSE CROWD.

I HAVE THREE
MORPHED
DOLLARS!
IT'S FORTUNE! HERE!

I DON'T WANT YOUR
FILTHY DOUGH! I'M NOT
AFTER MONEY! I
WANT A HEALTHY
BODY!

I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
YOU MEAN YOU WANT ME TO
CURE YOUR...YOUR AFFLICTION?

THAT'S WHAT I MEAN,
DOO! I WANT TO
WALK LIKE NORMAL
PEOPLE... LOOK
LIKE NORMAL
PEOPLE...

I'LL... I'LL
HAVE TO
EXAMINE
YOU! YOU DON'T
KNOW WHETHER
I CAN DO ANY-
THING FOR YOUR
FOOT!

YOU CAN'T IF IT'S
INCURABLE! BUT
THERE IS A WAY FOR
ME TO BE ABLE TO
WALK... A REVOLU-
TIONARY WAY!
SOMETHING THAT'S
NEVER BEEN DONE
WITH HUMAN BEINGS
BEFORE!

I... I
DON'T
KNOW
WHAT
YOU'RE
TALKING
ABOUT!

'AND THEN YOU TOLD ME, ALAN'
DO... TELL ME YOUR MAD SCHEME.'

NO! NOT ON
LORD, NO!
I WON'T HAVE
ANYTHING TO
DO WITH IT...

OHAF, DOO!
JUST FOUR-
SELF! EITHER
THAT... OR
YOUR WIFE
FINDS OUT ABOUT
LOOZING!

'YOUR PLAN FASCINATED ME, ALAN! BUT I WAS
TRAPPED! SO I AGREED! I AGED TO.'

HOW? YOU'RE ACTING SMART,
DOO! YOU GET THE EDWAPHANT
SET UP... AND I'LL BE AT
YOUR OFFICE IN AN HOUR!

WHERE... WHERE
WILL YOU GET
AID?

THAT'S BY BUSWHEEL, DOO!
AT YOUR OFFICE... IN
AN HOUR!

AS... AS
YOU WHEN?

"YES, ALAN! I WAS TRAPPED! TRAPPED... AND FRIGHTENED! I WENT TO MY OFFICE-LABORATORY AND NERVOUSLY PREPARED THE EQUIPMENT..."

"LET'S GET RUBBER ROSE... CLAMPS... DOYLER... BEEP..."



"I WENT TO THE DOOR AND OPENED IT! YOU STOOD THERE... THE 'GAIN IN YOUR ARM...'"

"HE'S DISOCCUPED! I ENLIGHTENED HIM! HELP ME GET HIM INSIDE!"

"I-YES! OF COURSE!"



"AND THEN, I DID IT! I REFORMED THAT HORRIBLE OPERATION! IT WAS ALMOST DARK WHEN YOU CLIMBED DOWN FROM THE TABLE..."

"NOW... NOW... DO YOU FEEL THAT'S ABOUT ALL?"



"YOU LOOKED DOWN AT YOUR NEW-HEALTHY BODY AND YOU LAUGHED..."



"I TOLD YOU IT WOULD BE HEAVEN FORHORN! BOSS-MORPHUM! I TOLD YOU!"



"AND THEN YOU WENT AWAY! I PRAYED I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN! ON THE NIGHTMARE! I HAD... TRYING TO FORGET THAT HORRIBLE THING CO DONE..."



"IT WAS MORE THAN TEN YEARS LATER WHEN YOU CAME BACK! I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN! ALMOST..."



IT WAS DANGER, WASN'T IT ALAN?
YOU HAD CANCER! THE HORRIBLE
MALIGNANT KIND...

HOW MUCH TIME
DO I HAVE,
BOB?

SIX MONTHS!
A FEW! NO
MORE!

THEN WE'VE GOT
TO DO IT AGAIN!
IT'S THE ONLY
WAY OUT!

NO! NO! I
WON'T PER-
FORM THAT
FIERCISH
OPERATION
AGAIN!

AREN'T YOU
FORGETTING
SOMETHING, DOO?
THAT KID... THAT
KID HE KILLED!

YOU... YOU'D
TELL...?

I WAS HELPLESS, ALAN! HELPLESSLY TRAPPED!
THERE WAS BLOOD ON MY HANDS! A POOR MAN'S
BLOOD! THE ONE YOU'D BROUGHT TO MY LABORA-
TORY OVER TEN YEARS BEFORE! AND NOW, YOU
WERE ASKING ME TO DO IT AGAIN...

THAT'S SMART, DOO! AFTER
ALL, YOU HAVE YOUR
REPUTATION TO
PROTECT! I'LL BE
BACK... TONIGHT!
BE READY!

YES! I'LL... BE
READY! I

AND SO, FOR THE SECOND TIME, I PREPARED THE
EQUIPMENT NECESSARY FOR THAT HORRIBLE OPERA-
TION! AND THAT NIGHT, FOR THE SECOND TIME,
YOU BROUGHT A VICTIM TO MY LABORATORY...

EXAMINE HIM FIRST, THIS TIME!
I DON'T WANT WHAT HAPPENED
LAST TIME TO HAPPEN AGAIN!
MAKE SURE HE'S HEALTHY!

Y-YES,
ALAN!

AND ONCE AGAIN, I DID IT! I KILLED THAT POOR MAN!
AND YOU GOT UP FROM THE OPERATING TABLE HEALTHY
AND CANCER-FREE...

DON'T COME BACK!
DON'T EVER COME
BACK!

I'LL BE BACK!
AND... FOREVER!

AND ONCE AGAIN, I HAD THOSE HORRIBLE NIGHT-
MARES...

KID! KID! KID!
KID!

WHY? WHY... WHAT'S
YOUR FRIENDS ON?
...I MUST HAVE
BEEN DREAMING...

'BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T SATISFIED, WERE YOU, ALAN? TWELVE YEARS LATER, YOU WERE BACK! YOU'D DISCOVERED SOMETHING WONDERFUL ABOUT THOSE OPERATIONS...

ETERNAL YOUTH? I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

THAT'S WHAT I SAID... DOO! ETERNAL YOUTH!

JUST LOOK AT MY FACE! WHEN I FIRST CAME TO YOU, I WAS THIRTY-ONE! NOW... TWENTY-TWO YEARS LATER...

YOU... YOU LOOK THIRTY FIVE... AT THE MOST!

EXACTLY! IT'S THOSE OPERATIONS YOU PERFORMED! AN OPERATION LIKE THAT PERFORMED EVERY TEN YEARS, WILL KEEP ME LOOKING LIKE THIS INDEFINITELY!

YOU'RE MAD!

AM I MAD, DOCTOR? WON'DRANT LOOK AT YOU! LOOK HOW YOU'VE AGED! YOU'RE FIFTY-ONE... AND YOU LOOK IT! ME? I'M FIFTY-THREE...

I WON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT! GET SOMEONE ELSE!

DEAR, DOG! HAVE IT YOUR OWN WAY! THE POLICE WILL BE VERY INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT ABOUT THOSE TWO UNIDENTIFIED CORPSES...

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! GONE TONIGHT! I'LL BE READY!

'THAT WAS TEN YEARS AGO, ALAN! THAT NIGHT TEN YEARS AGO, I PERFORMED THIS EVIL... THIS HORROR... FOR THE FIRST AND LAST TIME...

ARE YOU IN TEN YEARS, DOG?

I HOPE I'M DEAD BY THEN.

'BUT I DIDN'T DIE, ALAN!' AND SO, THIS AFTERNOON, YOU CAME FOR THE FOURTH TIME...

WELL! ALAN!

I'M HERE, THIS... AS I PROMISED TO BE...

"YOU HADN'T **AGED** VERY MUCH IN THOSE TEN YEARS, ALAN! YOU **STILL** LOOKED AS THOUGH YOU WERE IN YOUR THIRTIES!"

"NOT **AS** FOR A MAN OF **SIXTY** THREE, EH, ERIC?"

"ALAN! LET'S **LEAVE** WELL ENOUGH **ALONE**, PLEASE!"

"NO, ERIC! TOMORROW, WE **PERFORM** THE OPERATION **AGAIN**!"

"E-E... ALL **RIGHT**, ALAN!"

"AND SO, TOMORROW, YOU **BROUGHT** ME OUR **FOURTH** VICTIM..."

"HELP ME **SET** HIM ON THE **TABLE**, ERIC!"

"Y-YES, ALAN!"

THE THROBBING SOUND FILLED THE LABORATORY! ERIC STOOD WITH HIS ARMS FOLDED, STARING DOWN AT ALAN.

"BUT, NOW IT'S **ALL** OVER, ALAN! YOU'RE **HELPLESS**! YOU **CAN'T** STOP ME FROM **DOING** WHAT **MUST** BE **DONE**!"

"ERIC! GO ON WITH IT! I **DON'T** LEAVE ME LIKE THIS! **GO ON WITH THE OPERATION!**"

"NO, ALAN! I'M **NOT** GOING TO **KILL** HIM! I'M **NOT** GOING TO **HURT** HIS **BODY**!"

"ERIC! THINK OF YOUR **WIFE**, YOUR **REPUTATION**!"

"BRENDA **DIED** LAST YEAR, ALAN! I'M AN **OLD** MAN! LIFE **DOESN'T** **MEAN** ANYTHING **ANYMORE**! I'M **GOING** TO THE **POLICE** AND **CONFESS** EVERYTHING!"

"ERIC! **NO!** **DON'T** **LEAVE** ME!"

ERIC TOOK A NEEDLE FROM THE INSTRUMENT TRAY AND STARED DOWN AT ALAN.

"BUT **BEFORE** I **DO**, THERE'S **SOMETHING** I **MUST** **DO**!"

"NO, ERIC! **NO!** **DON'T** **PUNCTURE** THE **BLOOD** **HOSE**!"

THE HEAD ON THE TABLE STAINED IN NUMBER AS ERIC JAMMED THE NEEDLE INTO ONE OF THE THROBBING HOSES THAT RAN TO ITS NOSE...

EEEEEE

GOOD-BYE, ALAN!

IT'S EYES BLAZED IN THEIR SOCKETS AS IT WATCHED THE TINY FOUNTAIN OF RED GUSH IN BUBBLING SPLURTS FROM THE PUNCTURED WOUND...

ERIE! I'LL DIE!

AND THE SECRET OF EXCHANGING LIVING BODIES WILL DIE WITH YOU, ALAN!

ERIC ROLLED THE TABLE WITH THE UNCONSCIOUS FOURTH VICTIM LYING UPON IT PAST THE PLEADING HEAD...

ERIC! COME BACK!

GOOD-BYE, ALAN...

ERIC! HAVE PITY!

THIS TIME THE POLICE WON'T FIND AN UNIDENTIFIED DECAPITATED CORPSE TO PUNISH THEM, ALAN!



THE PUMP THROBBERD OUT! THE HEAD ON THE LABORATORY TABLE CONNECTED TO THE VARIOUS HOSES AND TUBES... NEW DIZZY...

ERIC! C-COME, B-B-BACK!



AND THEN THE PREVIOUS RED FLUID STOPPED GUSHING FROM THE PUNCTURED TUBING! THE HEAD'S EYES GLACED ALAN THOUGH... WHOSE BODY HAD DIED THIRTY-THREE YEARS BEFORE, HAD FINALLY JOINED IT...

HEL, HUH, DOESN'T THAT TOP ALL, KIDDIES? SO ERIC HAD BEEN SWITCHING ALAN'S HEAD FROM BODY TO BODY? WELL, THAT'S ONE WAY TO KEEP ONE'S YOUTH, ISN'T IT? HEL, HEL! AS FOR ERIC'S PITY... WELL, HE'S IN THE BODY MATCH, NOW... PADDY O'ELL DEPARTMENT! WHO'D BELIEVE A STORY LIKE THIS? HEL, HEL! AND ERIC WASN'T MUCH HELP IN COORDINATING ERIC'S STORY! A REGULAR DEADHEAD, THAT BOY! ONE YOU LATER! HERE'S V.L.F.



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WEL, HERE WELCOME TO THE VAULT OF HORROR, CREEPS! THIS IS YOUR HOST IN HOWLS, THE VAULT-KEEPER, SPEAKING... ER... SPEAKING! COULD MY BIT DOWN? GAVE TO JOIN A RED-HOT POWER BARREL I HAVE A FEW EXTRA RED-HOT FORGERS! NOT ON! THEN I MIGHT AS WELL GO RIGHT INTO MY HORROR FARM! I CALL THIS SPINE-TINGLING, BLOOD-CURLING TALE...

A CREEP in the DEEP!

THE MOONLIGHT SHIMMERED OVER THE NERVOUS BLACK WATER ON THE LAKE! THE MAN ADJUSTED THE RUBBER DIVING MASK OVER HIS FACE AND STARTED DOWN THE SILVER SAND BEACH! THE SPEAR AND LAMP HUNG LAMBLY IN HIS HANDS! THE BLACK RUBBER FLIPPERS ON HIS FEET SLAPPED AGAINST THE WET LAKE SHORE.



PHILIP HAD BROUGHT MARGARET, HIS YOUNG BRIDE, TO HIS LAKESIDE RETREAT ALMOST A YEAR BEFORE THEY'D STOOD ON THE PORCH OF THE GATE AND ANNOUNCED...

OL' PHIL! IT'S BEAUTIFUL! SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL!

I TOLD YOU YOU'D LIKE LIVING HERE, MARGE! I KNOW I'LL SHOW YOU MY STOMACH... WHERE I PAINT!



THE WATER LAPPED AGAINST THE MAN'S ANKLES FHE FLOODED ON THE LAMP! ITS YELLOW BEAM REACHED OUT INTO THE NIGHT...



IT HAD BEEN A NIGHT JUST LIKE THIS THAT PHILIP HAD SUSPECTED SPEARING SOME FISH...

SPEAR FISH, PHILLY AT NIGHT? NOT!

SIMPLE, MAMMOT! I HAVE A WATER-FIGHT LAMP! THE FISH ARE PARALYZED BY ITS LIGHT! THEY FREEZE JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO...



THE MAN MOVED FORWARD... HIS BLACK RUBBER FLIPPERS SLIDING ACROSS THE LAKE BOTTOM! THE WATER WAS UP TO HIS KNEES. NOW! IT WAS GOLD! GOLD... LIKE THAT NIGHT...



PHILIP HAD BOTTLED INTO HIS SUIT AND TAKEN MAMMOT OUT IN THE BOWSCAT! WHEN HE'D REACHED THAT 'SPECIAL' SPOT, HE'D SLIPPED ON THE RUBBER FLIPPERS...



WHAT ARE THEY FOR, PHIL, DEAR?

SPEED! SICK THESE THINGS AND YOU REALLY SHOOT THROUGH THE WATER...

THEN, HE'D DONNED THE RUBBER MASK WITH THE CIRCULAR GLASS WINDOW...

AND THAT? WHAT'S THAT FOR?

KEEPS THE WATER AWAY FROM MY EYES SO I CAN SEE CLEARLY!



THEN HE'D LIFT HIS WATER-FIGHT LAMP, TAKEN HIS THREE-PRONGED SPEAR, AND...



WELL? HERE GOES!

YOU, YOU LOOK LIKE A MAN FROM MARS!

YES, THE WATER HAD BEEN GOLD THAT NIGHT! THE BUBBLES FROM THE DIVE HAD GLEAMED BRIGHT AND PHILIP HAD DIPPED DOWNWARD INTO THE BLACK-NESS...



THERE GOES ONE... A BEAUTY!

THE MAN MOVED FORWARD INTO THE LAKE! THE WATER LAPPED AGAINST HIS THIGHS! THE MOONLIGHT FLASHED ON THE SURFCE...



THE FISH HAD FLASHED THROUGH THE LAMP BEAM! PHILIP HAD KICKED AFTER IT, BUT IT'D SNEEZED SHARPLY AND SHOT OFF INTO THE BLACKNESS! SO PHILIP HAD COMED TO THE SURFACE FOR A BREATH...

GASP... GASP...
MARGIE! MARGIE!
GASP IT!

PHILIP! YOU'RE
SO FAR FROM
THE BOAT!



THAT STRANGE SOUND! PHILIP HAD HEARD IT THEN! BUT HE HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT...

I'M DEAD, MARGIE!
SEE YOU...

PHILIP!
I... I...



HE'D COME BACK DOWN! THAT TIME HE'D FOUND ONE! A BIG-SIZED LAKE TROUT! HE'D CHASED IT AND BREASTED IT JUST AS HIS BREATH HAD GIVEN OUT! WHEN HE'D POPPED TO THE SURFACE, MARGIE WAS SCREAMING...



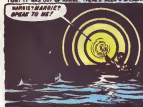
EEEEEEET!
I'M DEAD, MARGIE!
HERE I AM!

AND THEN THE SCREAMING HAD STOPPED, AND HE'D HEARD MARGIE KICKING AROUND IN THE BOAT...



LOOK, MARGIE!
ISN'T HEA DEAD??

SILENCE! JUST THE WATER LAPPING AGAINST THE BOARDWALK! HE'D SHOT THE LAMP IN THE BOAT'S DIRECTION! IT WAS OUT OF RANGE! THERE'D BEEN A FLASH...



MARGIE! MARGIE!
SPEAK TO ME!

THAT NOISE AGAIN! THAT QUEER NOISE! LIKE SOMEONE BEATING AN OLD DIRTY CARPET! PHIL'D STARTED TOWARD THE BOAT, CALLING HER NAME! NO ANSWER! THEN, WHEN HIS LIGHT COULD REACH IT, HE'D SEEN...



GOOD LORD! MARGIE!
MARGIE!

THE MAN MUTTERED TO HIMSELF
AS THE WATER LICKED AND CUPLED
AROUND HIS NECK...



PHILIP HAD DIED AGAIN AND AGAIN...
LOOKING FOR MARRIE? FINALLY,
AFTER HALF AN HOUR, HE'D CRUMLED
ONTO THE OVERTURNED BOATWAT...
SCALPHEM... SCALPHEM...



AND HE'D WATCHED FROM HIS
POUND THE NEXT DAY, AS THE
BOATS MOVED BACK AND FORTH...
DRAWING FOR HIS BODY...



BUT THEY NEVER FOUND HER BODY! FOR THREE
DAYS, THEY DRASSED... WITH NO LOOK-TO PHILIP
HAD DROWNED THE GAIN, AND THE LAKE... AND SOME
ARMY...

I'M SURE SORRY TELL YOU
SO, PHIL! WE'LL ALL BOSS
YOU WOULD HERE! I'LL TRY
AND GET A GOOD PRIZE
FOR THE PLACE!

JUST GET ME WHAT I
PAID FOR IT, BO!
THAT'S... ALL I WANT!



BUT THREE MONTHS LATER PHIL'S COME BACK...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'VE
BEEN HAVIN' TROUBLE
GETTING RID OF THE
PLACE? I'VE GOT TO
HAVE THE MONEY!

SORRY, PHIL! NO
ONE'S BUYIN' THESE
DAYS! FIRST HOUR
WE'VE DISAPPEARANCE...
AND NOW THESE MISTER-
YOUR DEATHS...



DEATHS? WHAT
DEATHS?

OH! THAT'S RIGHT! YOU BEEN
AWAY! YOU COULDN'T A-KNOW
YEP! DEATHS! THREE! ALL IN
TWO MONTHS TIME! FOUND
THEIR BODIES... FLOATIN' ON
THE LAKE!



DROWNED?

HOPE! NO WATER IN THE LAKES!
THEIR BLOOD HAD BEEN
DRAINED!



THE WATER GLID UPWARD, OVER THE MAN'S CHEST! HE MOVED FORWARD SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY.



BLOOD DRAINED.

DEPT FOLKS SAY THERE'S LEECHES IN THE LAKE! NOBODY WANTS TO BEY NOW!



LEECHES?

YEP! SO THAT'S WHY I CAN'T SELL YOUR PLACE PHIL! NOT NOW... ANYWAY! I SUGGEST YOU START LIVING THERE AGAIN... TILL ALL THIS BLOOD DRIES!



I'LL... HAVE TO... ED? I I HAVEN'T EARNED A DIME SINCE... SINCE BARBARET DROPPED! I... I CAN'T SEEM TO PAINT ANYMORE!

OH, YOU'LL START AGAIN, PHIL! MAKE NEW! BACK AT THE OLD STUDIO WILL HELP!



WITHIN A MATTER OF MONTHS, THE LAKESIDE HOMES HAD ALL BEEN FORGOD UP AND ABANDONED! ED HAD MANY MORE TO TELL BEHIND PHIL'S...

WHAT'S UP, ED? WHY THE URGENT CALL?

MY BORN, PHIL! LISTEN! I GOT A THEORY!



SO PHILIP HAD COME BACK... COME BACK TO THE LAKE! AND THEN... ABOUT A WEEK LATER, THE FOURTH VICTIM WAS FOUND...

WELL? NOT A DROP! BLOOD COMPLETELY DRAINED!

HE... HE WENT SWIMMING... SO... LAST NIGHT? I I TOLD HIM NOT TO GET THE LEECHES... SO... SO...



TUESDAY, ED? WHAT ABOUT?

ABOUT THEIR BODIES... AND THE LEECHES! THERE AIN'T NO LEECHES IN THAT LAKE, PHIL! NEVER HERE! NO! IT AIN'T LEECHES! WHAT'S BEEN DRAINING THE BLOOD FROM THEIR BODIES? IT'S... IT'S...



THE MAN LOOKED DOWN AS THE WATER CLIMBED OVER THE MASK!
THE MAN WAS SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING...



YOU'RE MAD, BUT IT'S CRAZY!

IT'S IT? DIDN'T ALL THOSE PEOPLE SWIMMING IN THE LAKE AT NIGHT...



YES, BUT... BUT A VAMPIRE!

YES... A VAMPIRE... IN THE LAKE!



BUT... BUT MARRIE... MY WIFE? SHE WASN'T SWIMMING IN THE LAKE! SHE...

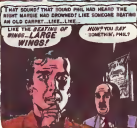
I'M NOT MARRIED! YOUR WIFE IN THIS. PHIL! HER DEATH WAS DIFFERENT! BESIDES! WE NEVER FOUND HER...



THAT SOUND! THAT SOUND PHIL HAD HEARD THE NIGHT MARRIE HAD DROWNED! LIKE SOMEONE BEATING AN OLD CARPET... LIKE... LIKE...

LIKE THE BEATING OF WINGS... LARGE WINGS!

HUNT? YOU SAY SOMETHING, PHIL?



PHIL HAD BARTED OUT OF ED'S OFFICE...

PHIL? WHERE YOU GOING?

TO GET YOUR LARK VAMPIRE, ED!



...SPED BACK TO THE CABIN... RIPPED THE THREE-FOOTED FOUR-EGG FROM ITS LONG WOODEN SHIRT... AND...

SHARP? GOT TO GET IT GOOD... AND... SHARP...



THE MAN WAS SWIMMING NOW...KICKING INTO THE DARKNESS! HIS LAMP TUNNELED INTO THE INKY LIGHTS... BEFORE HIM! SUDDENLY...



EYES? BLARING
AT ME...

IT CAME AT HIM... SLOWLY... WHITE AND TURNING! THE LIGHT GLEAMED ON ITS SHINY FANGS...



JUST A LITTLE CLOSER?
NOT A...LITTLE...

SUDDENLY, IT FLASHED AT HIM... ITS SHARP LITTLE TEETH LASHING AT HIS THROAT! PHILIP RAISED THE NOODLE-LIKE WOODEN SPEAR, KICKED HARD WITH HIS RUBBER FLIPPERS, DODGED THE ATTACK...



...AND, AS IT TURNED SO THAT THE LIGHT FELL ON ITS FACE, PHILIP LUNGED, RAMMING THE SPEAR... THROUGH ITS VULNERABLE HEART...



MARGIE'S LIFELESS BODY SETTLED TO THE LAKE FLOOR, THE WOODEN SPEAR STOKING ANGULARLY FROM HER CHEST... SENDING UP LITTLE BUBBLES...



...AS PHIL MOVED OUT OF THE LAKE INTO THE COLD NIGHT AIR...



HEA, HEA! YEP THAT'S THE GUY, KIDDER! MARGIE WAS ATTACKED BY A KAMPFIE AS SHE SAT WATCHING PHIL, PHIL! WHEN THE BOAT TURNED OVER, SHE BECAME THE FIRST UNDERWATER KAMPFIE IN HONOLULU AIRPORT! WELL!

NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO THE OLD WAY! OH, BY THE WAY! NEXT TIME YOU GO SWIMMING AT NIGHT, BE CAREFUL! HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF, Y'KNOW! 'GEE!



DUKES IN DISGUISE

Duke Aldo Braggadocio and Duke Gino Severini were two powerful nobles of 15th century Tuscany. Their duchys were in neighboring provinces and they hated one another! One boasted that he had more brave . . . more men-at-arms to defend his land, the other bragged that his castle was impregnable to any attack!

Duke Braggadocio was famous for his fertile vineyards and rare Chianti wine-making. Duke Severini charged Braggadocio with having diverted streams from his land to supply his rich vineyards with an elaborate irrigation system. Severini's grapes were quite inferior, as was his soil! But he had something to make Braggadocio envious . . . sanctuaries of beautifully plumed live birds from all parts of the world!

Both Dukes were young and impetuous and madly in love with dark-eyed Graciosa Bavaqua, a nobleman's daughter! Graciosa was equally impressed by the power and possessions of both suitors. When they proposed marriage to her separately, but simultaneously, she knew she must choose one by the process of elimination!

One night, while sitting in Severini's bird-inhabited gardens, her eyes glittered like starlight on a stiletto as she wheedled and coaxed the Duke into undertaking a quest . . . to prove his love for her. He was to disguise

himself, gain entry into Braggadocio's domain, and steal a bottle of rare Chianti from the latter's wine cellar. She would know the bottle! It would bear the personal seal and coat-of-arms of the Casa Braggadocio.

Then she paid an unexpected call upon Duke Braggadocio, whom she found strolling amongst his sun-lit, fruit-laden trellises. The Duke was soon mesmerized, too, by the grape-stained lips that spoke of a quest for the proof of love!

Braggadocio was to disguise himself, slip unsuspected into Severini's "impregnable" duchy, and pluck a leather from a blue heron tethered in his rival's gardens. The exquisite bird was the favorite of his master!

.

Braggadocio had the flowing blue leather in his hand when the deprived and indignant heron beat its wings in wild alarm! The din created by the frightened bird attracted the Captain-of-the-guard and his soldiers. Duke Severini was absent at the time, being away on his quest. Without waiting for their Duke's counsel . . . nor his return . . . they chopped off the violating Duke's limbs! Then they sent the shaft of Braggadocio's dead body back to his duchy with just the calamus of the leather which had been stripped of all of its flowing azure bark.

A few days later, the body of Duke Severini came home to his duchy in a cask full of wine!

Braggadocio's men had captured him . . . and drowned him in a barrel of the rarest Chianti!

THE OLD WITCH'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

HELLO! YEP! HERE'S ANOTHER ONE! ANOTHER CHILDISH-CHILLER! ANOTHER INFANTILE INSANITY! A "GRIM"...AND I HEAR IT...FAIRY TALE! I CALL THIS DELIGHTFUL DELIRIUM INTO THE BUCKERLY BUREAU...

...FROM HUNGER!



ONCE UPON A TIME... LONG LONG AGO... THERE WAS A KINGDOM... AN **UNHAPPY** KINGDOM! THE **REASON** THAT THIS KINGDOM WAS UNHAPPY WAS BECAUSE THE **PEOPLE** IN THIS UNHAPPY KINGDOM WERE UNHAPPY! AND THE **REASON** THAT THE **PEOPLE** IN THIS UNHAPPY KINGDOM WERE UNHAPPY WAS BECAUSE THE **PEOPLE** WERE **STARVING**...

THE BABY IS **CRYING** AGAIN, NASTURTUM!

THE BABY IS **HOWLING** BELZEM! HE **HAVE** NO **FOOD**!



Now high up on a mountain, overlooking this unhappy kingdom, was a majestic castle...



...and in this majestic castle was a majestic dining-room...



CHOMP
CHOMP...

...and in this majestic dining-room sat a majestic king...



CHOMP?
CHOMP?

All day long, this majestic king would sit in the majestic dining room (of the majestic castle high up on the mountain overlooking the unhappy kingdom) and eat... and eat... and...



CHOMP...
CHOMP...

Now it seems that in this majestic castle was a kitchen! And in this kitchen was a chef... the royal chef.



ROYAL
CHEF!

T-T-YES, YOUR
MAJESTY!



MORE
FOOD!

T-T-YES, YOUR
MAJESTY!

All day long, while the majestic king ate in the majestic dining-room (of the majestic castle high up on the mountain overlooking the unhappy kingdom), the royal chef would soon food for him...



EAT... EAT! THAT'S
ALL HE DOES IS EAT!
THE FAT FISH!

HURRY!
MORE FOOD,
ROYAL CHEF!

AND EVERY NIGHT, AFTER THE MAJESTIC KING HAD STUFFED HIMSELF UNTIL HE COULD EAT NO MORE...

NO... BURRRRPP... MORE, ROYAL CHEF!

Y-Y-YES, YOUR MAJESTY!



THE ROYAL CHEF WOULD LEAVE THE CASTLE AND MAKE HIS WAY DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TO HIS STARVING FAMILY...

FAT MAN! WHILE THE PEOPLE STARVE, HE STUFFS HIMSELF SO FULL HE CANNOT MOVE!



WHEN THE ROYAL CHEF WOULD ARRIVE AT HIS RAGNHACKLE HOUSE, HIS STARVING FAMILY WOULD MEET HIM AT THE DOOR...

DADDY! WE'RE...

...HUNGRY, DADDY!

DID YOU... DID YOU BRING ANYTHING TONIGHT, DEAR?



I MANAGED TO STEAL A GRON-STEER THAT STILL HAS A LITTLE MEAT ON IT! HERE!

BOOBY!

BOOBY!



AND WHILE HIS STARVING FAMILY WOULD HIBBLE THE LAST BIT OF MEAT STILL CLINGING TO THE STEEN CRUMSTICK, THE ROYAL CHEF WOULD WATCH... AND SMILE.

HEY BLUTTONOUS FIB!

LEAVE BACK THE JARCE!

NO! IT'S MY TURN, TONIGHT!



BUT THE OTHER PEOPLE OF THE UNHAPPY KINGDOM WERE NOT AS FORTUNATE AS THE ROYAL CHEF'S FAMILY! THEY COULD NOT STEAL ANY FOOD! THE MAJESTIC KING KEPT HIS LIVESTOCK HERD WELL GUARDED...

LOOK, CAPTAIN! A PEASANT...

HE IS STEALING A CALF!



THOSE WHO TRIED TO STEAL FOOD FROM THE KING WERE ALWAYS SEVERELY PUNISHED...

BEELZEBUB! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HAND?

I WAS CAUGHT... STEALING A CALF! THEY... CHASE...



SO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNHAPPY KINGDOM GREW MORE AND MORE UNHAPPY...

THE **BABY** SON...
WAS... **STAPPED**
TO DEATH... **WHEEEDING!**

I... **NO...** I TRIED.
NASTURTIUM!



WHILE THE MAJESTIC KING GREW FATTER AND FATTER...

MORE FOOD, ROYAL
CHEF!

Y-Y-YES, YOUR
MAJESTY!



AND EACH NIGHT, WHEN THE
ROYAL CHEF WOULD COME HOME...

DADZT! ...**HURRY!** DID YOU
WE'RE... **DADZT!** **BRING** ANY-
THING TONIGHT, **DEARY?**



...HE WOULD WATCH HIS STARVING
FAMILY HIBBLE THE SCRAPS
HE'D STOLEN...

IT'S **MY**
TURN TO
SUCK THE
JACK FROM
THE BONE!

NOT IT'S
MY
TURN!
CHILDREN!
PLEASE!
SERIOUS...



...AND HE'D **SNIFF...**

...IT'S **MY**
TURN,
TONIGHT!

PIC!
BLUTTONDOOP
PIC!



THIS, ONE NIGHT...

NO, **SCHNAPP!**
MORE, ROYAL
CHEF!

Y-Y-YES, YOUR
MAJESTY!



THE ROYAL CHEF PREPARED TO GO HOME (HE POKED
AROUND IN THE GARBAGE SEARCHING FOR A BONE)

PICKED GLEAN! NOT A
SCRAP OF FOOD! THE **PIC!**
THE FAT PIC!



IF I COULD, I'D BE
IN AND



WHAT ARE YOU
THINKING?

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CLEANING
UP THE
TABLE,
YOUR
MAJORITY**



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**A PIG? YOU'RE A
PIG! AN OVER-
STUFFED FAT PIG!
DO YOU KNOW
WHAT A PIG IS
GOOD FOR?**



AND SO, FOR THE LAST TIME, THE ROYAL CHEF MADE HIS WAY DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TO HIS STARVING FAMILY...

FAT PIG? WELL, HE'LL STUFF HIMSELF NO MORE!



THIS TIME HE CARRIED A LARGE SACK! WHEN HE ARRIVED HOME...

DADDY! MUMMY! DID A FEAST? WE'RE DADDY! YOU A FEAST?



HAVE WHA? A FEAST? INVITE EVERYBODY! WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A FEAST!



BUT, DADDY, WHERE DID YOU...

...GET THE FOOD?



THE FAT PIG? THE SLUTTEROUS OVER-STUFFED PIG!

MELVIN? W-WHAT DO YOU DO TO THE FIRST?



THE ROYAL CHEF REACHED INTO THE HUGE SACK...

WHAT DO YOU USUALLY DO WITH (BEEP!) (CHUCK!) (SAGBARED!) A HUGE FAT PIG? LOOK!



"WELL, NEXT NOT DOB" THERE'S A FARTY LITTLE GRIM FAIRY TALE. EN: KIDNEY AS FOR THE POOR STARVING PEOPLE OF THE UNHAPPY KINGDOM... WHEN THEY FOUND OUT THAT THEIR TROUBLES WERE ALL WRAPPED UP, THEY ALL LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER! OH, BY THE WAY! IF YOU'RE THINKING OF VISITING THAT LITTLE KINGDOM, DON'T DRIVE! LEAVE YOUR CAR HOME! HEE, HEE! THERE'S NO PLACE TO PORK! AND NOW, THE CHEF! KEEPER AWAY! 'BYE!



-THE END-

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

WELL, NEXT YEP, IT'S YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER MAN, FRIENDS... WELCOME YOU ONCE MORE TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! FOR MY SPOT IN THE OLD WITCH'S SLIME SHEET, I'M GOING TO TELL YOU A YELP-YARN ADAPTED FROM A STORY BY ONE OF AMERICA'S TOP FANTASY WRITERS... RAY BRADBURY! MR. BRADBURY ORIGINALLY CALLED THIS YARN 'THE COFFIN' I BEING A CLEVER TALE-TELLER MYSELF. CALL IT...

THE COFFIN!



RICHARD BEALING HAD LISTENED WITH DECREASING DIFFICULTY AND MUCH CLERICITY FOR A NUMBER OF DAYS TO THE BANNING AND BATTLING ABOUT IN HIS ELDER BROTHER'S WORKSHOP. FINALLY, HE COULD STAND IT NO LONGER...



WHAT ARE YOU
GOING, CHARLES?

NO ARRY AND LET
ME ALONE! CAN'T YOU
SEE, I'M BUSY!

CHARLES WAS BEATING WAS A DYING MAN...A BARELY DYING MAN? HE SEEMED TO BE IN A GREAT HURRY, BETWEEN MAKING COUSINS AND SPITTLINGS, TO PIECE TOGETHER ONE LAST INVENTION...

PLEASE, CHARLES? TELL ME... IF YOU MUST KNOW, I'LL BE DEAD IN ANOTHER WEEK AND I'M...I'M BUILDING A COFFIN!



A COFFIN, MY DEAR CHARLES! THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A COFFIN! A COFFIN ISN'T THAT COMPLEX! COME ON, NOW THEY ARE YOU UP TOP?



I TELL YOU, IT'S A COFFIN! IN GOD COFFIN, FEB, BUT REVERENTLY LESS...A COFFIN!

BUT IT WOULD BE EASIER TO BUY ONE!



NOT ONE LIKE THIS! YOU COULDN'T BUY ONE LIKE THIS...EVERYWHERE! OH, IT'LL BE A REAL FINE COFFIN ALL RIGHT!

CHARLES FITTED AN ODD THINGMARBOR ON THE BOX BEFORE HIM! RICHARD MOVED FORWARD...



YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY LYING! WHY THAT COFFIN IS A GOOD TWELVE FEET LONG! SIX FEET LONGER THAN NORMAL SIZE?

YES!

AND THAT TRANSPARENT TOP! WHO EVER HEARD OF A COFFIN LID YOU CAN SEE THROUGH! WHAT GOOD IS A TRANSPARENT LID TO A COFFIN?



OH, JUST NEVER YOU MIND AT ALL! TUM-TO-TUM, OR SEE...

THE OLD MAN WENT RUMBLING AND HAMMERING ABOUT THE SHOP! RICHARD HAD TO SHOUT ABOUT THE GIN...



THIS COFFIN IS TERRIBLE THIN! WITH IT MUST BE FIVE FEET THICK! NOW UTTERLY UNNECESSARY!

I ONLY WISH I HAD LIKE TO PATENT THE AMAZING COFFIN! IT WOULD BE A GOD-BLESS TO ALL THE POOR PEOPLES OF THE WORLD! THINK HOW IT WOULD ELIMINATE THE EXPENSES OF FUNERALS...

OH, BUT, OF COURSE, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW IT WOULD DO THAT...SO YOUR NEW BILLY OF ME? WELL, I SHOULDN'T TELL YOU! IF THIS COFFIN COULD BE MADE-FORWARDED, AND, WHAT MONEY PEOPLE WOULD SAVE!



OH, SO TO BLAZED!

RICHARD STORMED OUT OF HIS ELDER BROTHER'S SHOP! POOR RICHARD! YES, IT HAD BEEN AN UNPLEASANT LIFE! YOUNG RICHARD HAD ALWAYS BEEN SUCH A BOUNDER, HE'D NEVER HAD TWO COINS TO CLINK TOGETHER AT ONE TIME! ALL OF HIS MONEY HAD COME FROM OLD BROTHER CHARLIE, WHO HAD THE ISDECENCY TO REMIND HIM OF IT ALL THE TIME...



RICHARD SPENT MANY HOURS WITH HIS HOBBY! HE DEARLY LOVED PILING UP EMPTY BOTTLES WITH FRENCH WINE LABELS IN THE BARNYARD! AS RICHARD OFTEN SAID WHILE SITTING AND SIPPING, SIPPING AND SITTING...



ONE MORNING, THE OLD BROTHER TOOLED UPSTAIRS AND STOLE THE HIDDEN OUT OF THE ELSTING PHOTOGRAPH...



ANOTHER MORNING, HE RAIDED THE GARDENER'S GREENHOUSE...



STILL ANOTHER TIME, CHARLES RECEIVED A DELIVERY FROM A MEDICAL COMPANY...



RICHARD WAS NEVER ALLOWED TO BUY ANYTHING FOR HIMSELF! IT WAS ALWAYS BOUGHT FOR HIM...GIVEN TO HIM! HE HAD TO ASK FOR EVERYTHING, EVER WRITING PAPER! RICHARD CONSIDERED HIMSELF QUITE A MARTYR TO HAVE PUT UP WITH TAKING THINGS FROM THAT RICKETY OLD BROTHER FOR SO LONG! SO, NOW, WHILE THE HAMMERING AND THE BURNING EXCURSIONS WENT ON, RICHARD JUST SAT...AND WAITED...



FINALLY, ON THE FOURTEENTH MORNING, OLD CHARLIE ANNOUNCED...



AND DROPPED DEAD!

RICHARD, WITHOUT SHOWING HIS INNER EXCITEMENT...AND, WENT TO THE WINDOW, WATCHED THE SUNLIGHT PLAYFULLY BUTTERING AMONG THE EMPTY PAT BOTTLE-LIKE CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES, THEN PICKED UP THE PHONE AND PERFECTLY CALLED A NUMBER...

HELLO? BREZZ LAWN MONTGOMERY?

HE LOOKED TO THE STAIRS WHERE DEAR OLD BROTHER CHARLIE LAY PEACEFULLY SPRAWLED AMONG THE BARRISTER...

THIS IS THE BEALING RES-
DENCE? WILL YOU SEND AROUND
A BROKER, PLEASE? YES? FOR
BROTHER CHARLIE? YES?
THANK YOU!

LATER, AS THE MORTUARY PEOPLE WERE TAKING BROTHER CHARLIE OUT IN THEIR WAGON, THEY RE-
QUESTED INSTRUCTIONS...

AN ORDINARY CASSET? NO
FEDERAL SERVICE? PUT HIM IN
A FINE COFFIN! HE WOULD HAVE
PREFERRED IT THAT WAY...
SIMPLE? GOOD-BYE!

AFTER THEY LEFT, RICHARD RUBBED HIS HANDS TOGETHER...NOW I'VE SHALL SEE ABOUT THIS

'COFFIN' BUILT BY DEAR CHARLIE? I DO NOT SUPPOSE HE WILL REALIZE HE IS NOT BEING BURIED IN HIS 'SPECIAL' BOX? HA!

RICHARD DARTED INTO THE SHOP! THE COFFIN SAT BEFORE THE WIDE-PLUMED FRENCH WINDOWS, THE LID SHUT, COMPLETE AND READY, ALL PUT TOGETHER LIKE THE FINE GUARDS OF A SWISS WATCH! IT WAS VAST, AND RESTED UPON A LOW TABLE WITH ROLLERS BREATH FOR EASY MANEUVERING...

THE COFFIN INTERIOR, AS RICHARD PEEPED THROUGH THE TRANSPARENT LID, WAS SIX FEET LONG...

THERE MUST BE A GOOD THREE FEET OF FALSE BODY AT BOTH HEAD AND FOOT OF THE COFFIN, THEN THREE FEET AT EACH END COVERED BY SECRET PANELS WHICH, WHEN I FIND THE WAY OF OPENING THEM, WILL REVEAL...

OF COURSE! MONEY! IT WOULD BE JUST LIKE OLD CHARLIE TO BURY HIS RICHES INTO HIS GRAVE WITH HIMSELF, LEAVING ME WITH NOT A CENT TO BUY A BOTTLE WITH THE OLD Bitch!

RICHARD RAISED THE TRANSPARENT LID AND FELT ABOUT, BUT FOUND NO HIDDEN BUTTONS! THERE WAS A SMALL TUBE, STUDIOUSLY INKED ON WHITE, IMPERFECTLY TACKED TO THE SIDE OF THE SATIN-LINED BOX.

WHAT'S THAT? 'THE BRALING ECONOMY CASKET'!

CONCEPT: APRIL, 1951
SIMPLE TO OPERATE!
HMMPH!



RICHARD SHOOKED THINLY! WHO DID CHARLIE THINK HE WAS FOOL-ING? THERE WAS NO ONE WRITING! HE READ ON...

'DIRECTIONS: SIMPLY PLACE BODY IN COFFIN!' WHAT A FOOL THINKING TO HUNT FOR PUT BODY IN COFFIN! NATURALLY! NOW ELSE WOULD ONE SO ABOUT IT?



RICHARD PEERED INTENTLY, FINISHING OUT THE DIRECTIONS...

SIMPLY PLACE BODY IN COFFIN, AND MUSIC WILL START! WHAT? IT CAN'T? HE... I DON'T TELL ME ALL THIS WORK HAS BEEN FOR A...! WE'LL FIND OUT...!



THERE WOULD BE NO HARM IN LYING IN THE BOX... TESTING IT! RICHARD NOTICED SMALL VENTILATING HOLES IN THE SIDES! EVEN IF THE LID WERE GLUED DOWN, THERE'D BE AIR! RICHARD NOOTED HIMSELF UP...

HMMPH! 'SIMPLY PLACE BODY IN COFFIN AND MUSIC WILL START! HEALY!' NOW RAISE OF OLD CHARLIE!



HE WAS LIKE A MAN SETTING INTO A BATH-TUB! HE FELT BAKED AND WATCHED OVER! HE PUT ONE SHINY SHOE INTO THE COFFIN, CROOKED HIS KNEES AND EASED HIMSELF IN! HE CROUCHED THERE, AND UNDERSIDED ABOUT THE TEMPERATURE OF THE BATH-WATER...



CANDLING SOFTLY, RICHARD LAY DOWN, PRETENDING TO HIMSELF THAT HE WAS DEAD... THAT PEOPLE WERE SHEDDING TEARS ON HIM... THAT CANDLES WERE FLAMING AND SIGHING... AND THAT THE WORLD WAS STOPPED IN MID-STROKE BECAUSE OF HIS PASSING! HE PUT ON A LEAD-PALE EXPRESSION AND BAIT HIS EYES... HOLDING BACK THE LAUGHTER IN HIMSELF BEHIND PEELED, QUVERING LIPS...



THE LID SLAMMED DOWN ON HIM! FROM OUTSIDE, IF ONE HAD JUST COME INTO THE ROOM, ONE WOULD HAVE IMAGINED A WILD MAN WAS KICKING, POUNDING, SLATHERING, AND SHRIeking INSIDE A CLOSET...



THEN SILENCE! RICHARD RELAXED! THE LID WAS LOCKED! THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO BUT WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO COME AND LET HIM OUT...

A SMALL PANEL INSIDE THE BOX FLIPPED OPEN! A BRIGHT METAL ARM SNATCHED OUT! A NEEDLE STABBED RICHARD IN THE THORAX, SHOOTING HIM FULL OF BLOOD-THICK LIQUID BEFORE HE COULD REACT!



A GROWING NUMBER? TENSELY RICHARD COULDN'T MOVE HIS FINGERS... ON HIS ARMS... OR TURN HIS HEAD? HIS LEGS WERE COLD AND LIMP! ANOTHER PANEL OPENED! METAL FINGERES ISSUED FORTH ON STEEL ARMS! HIS LEFT WRIST WAS PIERCED BY A HUNG-LOOKING NEEDLE!



THIS TIME HE DID NOT SQUEAK! HIS TORSO WAS MOTIONLESS IN HIS ANAESTHETIZED MOUTH... A PUMP STARTED TO WORK! WHILE HIS BLOOD DRAINED OUT ONE SIDE OF HIS BODY, HIS RIGHT WRIST WAS PUMPED, HELD, A NEEDLE MOVED INTO IT, AND THE SECOND PUMP BEGAN TO FORCE FORMALDEHYDE INTO HIM...



A SMALL MOTOR POPPED AND WHINNED! THE ROOM SHIFTED BY AN EITHER SIDE OF HIM! LITTLE WHEELS REVOLVED! NO HALLSPEAKERS WERE REQUIRED! THE FLOWERS SPRAYED AS THE CASKET ROLLED THROUGH THE FRENCH WOODS, INTO THE GARDEN...

NOW IT IS THE TIME WHEN WE MUST CONSIDER THIS PART OF THIS MAN TO THE EARTH...



LITTLE SPRING SPACES LEAPED OUT OF THE SIDES OF THE CASKET! THEY BEGAN TO HIT! RICHARD SAW THE SPACES TONGUE UP DIRT! THE CASKIN SETTLED... BUMPER... SETTLED... BOB... BUMPS AND SETTLED... DUG... BUMPS AND SETTLED...

ARMED TO ARMED... DUST TO DUST...



THE COFFIN WAS DEEP! THE MUSIC PLAYED! THE LAST THING RICHARD BRALING SAW WAS THE SPRING ARMS OF THE BRALING ROBOTMY GABBIT REACHING UP AND PULLING THE WOLF IN RETRIBUTION RICHARD BRALING... RICHARD BRALING... RICHARD BRALING...



THE RECORD WAS STUCK! NOBODY HEARD? NOBODY WAS LISTENING...

WELL, RICHARD THAT'S THE STORY, KIDDER... **RAY BRADDOCK'S** YOUR LINE THIS **BRADDOCK'S** LET ME KNOW! THERE'S MORE OF HIS TALES HERE IN THE CRYPT! WEL, WEL! YEA, **OLD BRALING** MADE THE COFFIN FOR **BRALING**, NOT FOR HIMSELF! I GUESS HE **KNEW** HIS GOOD-FOR-NOTHING KID BROTHER **FERT** WELL! AND NOW, IT'S TIME TO **CLOSE** THE **OLD WITCH'S** MAG! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN **MY** **HEAD**, **TALES** FROM THE **CRYPT**! **WEE, NOW!**



WEE, NOW!



The Old Witch

THE HAUNT OF



NO. 17
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FEAR®

REPRINT
EDITION

FEATURING...



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



GARRETT

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

WEE, WEE! I SEE YOU'RE HORROR-ADDICT AGAIN. BACK FOR MORE SAVORY SERVINGS OF SCREAMS FROM MY CAULDRON? WELL, GOOD! WELCOME TO THE HUNT OF FEAR! THIS IS YOUR DELIRIUM-DIETICIAN, THE OLD WITCH, DOING UP ANOTHER REVOLTING RECIPE! READY? GOT YOUR DRUG DOGS PARTNERED UNDER YOUR CHAIRLINES? CAN'T GOT YOUR SHARPS? TIED NEATLY AROUND YOUR NECKS? THEN I'LL BEGIN DISHING OUT THE TERROR-TIGHT & GALL.

HORROR WE? HOW'S BAYOU?

THE MOSS-LADEN CYPRUS TREES THAT LINE THE RUTTED BAYOU ROAD SEEM TO HUNT... AND AN OLD PLANTATION HOUSE, WEATHER-BEATEN AND PAGES-BLOOMED UP IN THE CAR'S HEADLIGHT BEAMS! ITS COLUMNED PORTICO LEANS DANGEROUSLY LIKE SOME GIANTIC FUNGUS MONSTER GOUTING IN THE ROAD, BLOCKING THE AUTOMOBILE'S FURTHER PROGRESS! GUT IN THE DISTANCE A SHRIEK AND SCREAMS INTO THE NIGHT, AS IF LAUGHING AT THE DRIVER'S DISCOMFORT...

ALMOST AT THIS ROAD ENDS HERE! BUT I'M SURE THAT SIGN BACK THERE POINTED THIS WAY...

THE OAK DOOR SWINGS OPEN AND A YOUNG MAN STEPS OUT! HE STRIDES TOWARD THE RUN-DOWN MANSION...

GREY FORMS SCATTER AS THE LOST STRANGER MOUNTS THE STEPS OF THE COLLAPSED PORCH.

THE LARGE BRASS DOOR-KNOCKER RESOUNDS ACHILLINGLY INSIDE THE GHOST ALLEGIS HOUSE! FOOTSTEPS APPROACH AND THE HEAVY OAK FRONT DOOR CREAKS OPEN...

THERE'S A LIGHT SHINING THROUGH ONE OF THOSE SHUTTERED WINDOWS! THAT MEANS SOMEONE'S **LIVING** THERE! PERHAPS THEY CAN GIVE ME **DIRECTIONS**...

WHY? **SHARP RATS!** **HOW** COULD ANYONE **LIVE** OUT IN THIS GOD-FORSAKEN COUNTRY?

HOW DO YOU DO? MY NAME IS **FORMAN. MAX FORMAN!** I MUST HAVE MADE A **WRONG TURN** A FEW MILES BACK...

THE DOOR OPENS WIDE, REVEALING A SMALL, EYED, NIDDLE-NEED MAN.

COME IN, MR. FORMAN! COME IN! MY D'S BORN TO BED! TO **GIVEN UP** FOR TONIGHT!

GIVEN UP? I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

GIVEN UP WAITING FOR SOMEONE LIKE **POP** TO COME ALONG. MR. FORMAN! YOU SEE, I **SWITCHED** THAT SIGN DOWN THERE SO YOU'D **MAKE** THE TURN INTO OUR ROAD...

YOU... YOU DID THAT... ON PURPOSE? **WHY?**

FOR **EVERETT**, MR. FORMAN! **EVERETT**... MY BROTHER! EVERY SO OFTEN HE GETS **DIFFICULT**... AND I HAVE TO **PROMISE** HIM THINGS...

BUT WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH **ME?**

EVERETT IS **MAD**, MR. FORMAN! THAT'S WHY WE **LIVE** OUT HERE IN THE **BAYONS**! HE IS **DANGEROUS**! HE IS A **HOMICIDAL MANIAC**...

BUT... WHY... **WHY**... **ME?** **MORE**...



EVERETT HAS A STRONG
DESIRE TO ~~FEEL~~, MR. FORMANT!
THIS DESIRE CANNOT BE
SATISFIED FOR ANY
LENGTH OF TIME? IF IT
DOES... HE MAY TURN
ON ME?

YOU'RE...YOU'RE
JOKING? THIS
IS SOME SORT
OF GAG?

IF YOU WILL LOOK
BEHIND YOU, YOU WILL
SEE THAT THIS IS
NO JOKE...MR. FORMANT!

GAG!

OH-HUHNT?
...FOR EVERETT?
FOR ME?

FOR EVERETT
FOR YOU

OH-HUHNT?
OH-HUHNT?

IF I KEEP
AWAY...

OH-HUHNT?
OH-HUHNT?

KEEP AWAY-A-A

OH-HUHNT?
OH-HUHNT?

KEEP
AWAY!

THE SCREAMING PROTESTS OF THE YOUNG MAN
IN A GROWING SURGLE AS THE LINGERING MANNAGE'S
ICE-LIKE FINGERS CLOSE AROUND HIS NECK.

OH-HUHNT?
OH-HUHNT?

"TAKE HIM AWAY, EVERETT! TAKE
HIM DOWN INTO THE CELLAR."
I DON'T WANT TO SEE

THE ELDER MAN WATCHES AS HIS YOUNGER BROTHER
GRABBER SWINGS THE PROSTRATE FORM OF THE
STRANGER OVER HIS MASSIVE SHOULDERS AND
MOVES OFF THROUGH THE MISTY OLD MANSION...

I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU
DISMEMBER HIS BODY!"

OH-HUHNT?
OH-HUHNT?

LATER, THE DOOR TO THE BUS PLANTATION HOUSE OPENS AND THE ELDER BROTHER COMES OUT.



HOW TO GET RID OF THE CAR?

THE CAR LEAPS FORWARD WITH A LOUD GRINDING OF GEARS DOWN AN OVERGROWN PATH, FINALLY STOPPING BEFORE A SHIMMERING YELLOW POOL.



THE DOOR-SAND POOL WILL SWALLOW UP ALL TRACES OF IT...

RELEASING THE EMERGENCY BRAKE, THE ELDER BROTHER LEAPS OUT, AND THE CAR ROLLS FORWARD INTO THE BUCKING BOG, DISKING SLOWLY FROM SIGHT! BEYOND, FROM THE MANSION, A SICKENING SURGE OF LAUGHTER ECHOES INTO THE MIDNIGHT.

POOR EVERETT. WELL, PERHAPS THIS WILL SATISFY HIM... FOR A WHILE, AT LEAST!



FINALLY THE CAR HAS DISAPPEARED BELOW THE SURFACE OF THE ROLLING SHOCKSAND POOL! THE ELDER BROTHER MOVES BACK THROUGH THE BAYOU OVERGROWN TO THE MANSION! EVERETT STAINED IN THE OPEN BODILY, BREATHING HEAVILY! HIS HANDS ARE BLOTTED RED...



I'M FINISHED MONEY! COME, DEET!

N-NO, THANK YOU, EVERETT! JUST PUT WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM IN THE SACK AS USUAL.

EVERETT LUMBERS OFF AND RETURNS SHORTLY AFTER, A LARGE BLOOD-STAINED BAGG SWUNG OVER HIS SHOULDER.

HE... HE WAS A DOCTOR. SURE? I FOUND HIS CARD? I DON'T LIKE DOCTORS!

THROW WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM IN THE SHOCKSAND POOL, EVERETT... WITH THE OTHERS!



EVERETT'S STUPID FACE BRIGHTENS! HE GRINS JOUSTICALLY...

REMEMBER THE OTHERS, SURE? THE FAT SALESMAN AND THE WOMAN...

YES, EVERETT! I REMEMBER! GO AHEAD, NOW! IN THE SHOCKSAND POOL.

THE WOMAN WAS NICE? HER FLESH WAS SO SOFT? WHEN I CUT...

EVERETT!



EVERETT SCURRIES OFF TOWARD THE QUICKSAND POOL WITH HIS COPY SARGO! SIDNEY WATCHES HIM GO! YES! THE WOMAN! SHE WAS THE FIRST! HE REMEMBERED HER!

I SEE YOUR PARDON, MA'AM! MY BROTHER IS NOT TOO BRIGHT! COULD I HELP YOU?

I... I WANTED TO REACH HOUMA BY DARK! I MUST HAVE TURNED OFF THE MAIN ROAD.

I'M AFRAID I'VE LOST MY WAY! COULD YOU HELP ME GET BACK TO THE... THE HIGHWAY?

OH-HOHN!
OH-HOHN!

EVERETT?
WHO IS IT?



YOU'LL NEVER MAKE HOUMA TONIGHT, MA'AM! YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY THE NIGHT! THANK YOU! CAN START GET FRESH IN THE MORNING!

WELL, I DON'T KNOW! I WOULDN'T WANT TO IMPOSE...

YES! THE WOMAN HAD BEEN THE FIRST! DURING THAT NIGHT, EVERETT HAD COME TO HER ROOM AND...

THE SCREAM HAD AWAKENED SIDNEY! HE'D RUSHED TO THE WOMAN'S ROOM.

EVERETT!
SHOCK.

OH-HOHN!
OH-HOHN!

EEEEEE-
H H

HUNT WHAT WAS THAT?



SIDNEY HAD THROWN THE DISMEMBERED PARTS OF THE WOMAN'S BODY INTO THE QUICKSAND POOL! THAT HAD BEEN THE BEGINNING OF IT! AFTER THAT, EVERETT HAD GOTTEN HOUSE AND HOUSE! AND SIDNEY REALIZED THAT HE'D HAVE TO SUPPLY HIS BROS BROTHER WITH OTHER VICTIMS TO KEEP HIM SATISFIED.

ALL RIGHT, EVERETT! ALL RIGHT! I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING!

OH-HOHN...
OH-HOHN...

SO SIDNEY'D THOUGHT OF ALTERING THE DIRECTIONAL SIGN DOWN AT THE ROAD! SO WANDERERS WOULD COME TO THE MANSION.

MY NAME'S JACKSON, ANTHONY JACKSON! ON A TRAVELING SALESMAN! I SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN ONTO YOUR ROAD BY MISTAKE!

COME IN, MR JACKSON!
COME IN!



AND NOW THE DOCTOR! SIDNEY
WATCHES AN EVERETT LUMBER
BACK ONTO THE PORCH CARRYING
THE EMPTY BAG.

DID YOU?

YES, SIDNEY I.
I THREW THE PILES
IN THE POOL!



COME TO BED, P-YES...SIDNEY?
EVERETT!



SOON, THE LIGHTS BLINK OFF ONE
BY ONE IN THE RAMSHACKLE OLD
PLANTATION HOUSE! SIDNEY AND
HIS MAD BROTHER ARE ASLEEP!
BUT DOWN IN THE BAYOU, THE
BLACK SAND POOL ROLLS AND
GULFERS...



BENEATH ITS BUBBLING SURFACE, THE DISMEMBERED
PARTS OF THREE BODIES... A WOMAN'S, A SALES-
MAN'S, AND A DOCTOR'S... BUMP TOGETHER, TURNING
LAZILY... MELTING... FUSING... REORGANIZING
THEMSELVES... UNTIL...



A "FOLPY" HAND REACHES INTO THE BROWN NIGHT...

A SPRING-HAIRED ROTTEN WOMAN'S HEAD BORG TO
THE SURFACE...



ANOTHER FOLLOWS...THE PLUMP SALESMAN'S FACE
APPEARS...

AND THEN THE RECENTLY MURDERED... DOCTOR'S HEAD...



IN HIS BEDROOM, SIDNEY STIRS UNCOMFORTABLY IN HIS SLEEP! SUDDENLY, THE DOOR TO HIS CHAMBER BURSTS OPEN AND THREE FIGURES ARE FIRED IN IT, SHEDDING UNSTEADILY...



WHO... WHO'S THERE? EVERETT!
IS THAT... FOOT? I THOUGHT I
LOOKED YOU... IN... YOUR GEAR.

THE FIGURES MOVE FORWARD... INTO THE LIGHT! BUT THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGELY WRONG ABOUT THE FIGURES! SIDNEY STARES IN HORROR AS WHISPER ESCAPED FROM HIS THROAT.

NO! NO! OH, LORD...



FOR THE DISMEMBERED PARTS
OF EVERETT'S THREE VICTIMS
HAVE FUSED INCORRECTLY!
THE WOMAN'S HEAD RESTS UPON
THE SALESMAN'S TORSO...

...WHILE DOCTOR FORMAN'S
HEAD RESTS UPON THE
WOMAN'S TORSO...

...AND MR. JACKSON'S, THE
SALESMAN'S HEAD HAS FUSED
WITH THE DOCTOR'S BODY.



THE OTHER PARTS, THE ARMS AND LEGS OF EACH,
ARE EQUALLY AS CONFUSED! THE CONSUMMATION
MOVE FORWARD...TOWARD THE HYSTERICALLY
SCREAMING SIDNEY...

CLUTCHED IN ONE OF THE MIXED-UP-FIGURE'S HANDS
IS A SMALL BLACK BAR... THE KIND USED BY DOG-
FOOD TO CARRY THEIR SHORT LITTLE SHARP
INSTRUMENTS...

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAGGGGGHHHHHHHHH!



LOOKED IN HIS BARRIED-WINDOW ROOM. EVERETT LISTENS WITH GREAT PUZZLEMENT TO THE SWISHING THAT BOMBS THROUGH THE OLD HOUSE FOR THE NEXT TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES...

YAAAAEEEEEEEEEE!

FINALLY, THE SHAKING STOPS, AND ONLY A SOFT PITYFUL SOR-
BING IS HEARD FROM THE BARRIED
WINDOW. EVERETT WATCHES AS
THREE FIGURES TOTTER OUT OF
THE WINDOW.

...AND BACK INTO THE RAMON TO
THE GUARDIAN POOL...



SUDDENLY, A KEY PARTLES INTO THE LOCK OF THE
HEAVY DOOR OF EVERETT'S ROOM! HE TURNS
FROM THE BARRIED WINDOW! SIDNEY, OR WHAT
WAS ONCE SIDNEY BUT IS NOW NOTHING MORE THAN
A CONFUSED REORGANIZATION OF SIDNEY'S
DISMEMBERED BODY, STANDS BEFORE HIM... THE
UPSIDE-DOWN HEAD HANGING FROM THE LEFT
ARM, SWINGING... THE LEFT LEG, SEWN TO THE LEFT
JOCKLOCK, CROOKED AROUND IDLY AROUND A MARK-
SHIFT CRUTCH... THE RIGHT LEG SWAYING FROM
THE RIGHT SHOULDER. THE LEFT ARM DRUM-
PING FROM THE NECK, POSTULATING... AND THE
RIGHT ARM SUPPORTING THE ENTIRE BRISTLY RIGHT

HEL, HEL! YOU KNOW? EVERETT'S FACTING REALLY
MEXSED UP HIS BROTHER SIDNEY YOU MIGHT SAY
THEY GOT TOGETHER! OF COURSE, THE DOC WAS A
JORGSON SO HIS HEAD DIRECTED THE WHOLE OPERA-
TION! WHAT A LAUGH-THOUGH! HE'D HAD NO JAMES-
FRETIS IN HIS BAW! SIDNEY THOUGHT IT WAS A SCREAM
WHAT HAPPENED TO SIDNEY AND EVERETT YOU
ASK? OH, THEY'RE STILL DOWN THERE, DEEP IN
THE BAYING OF LOUISIANA! NEXT
TIME YOU'RE DRIVING IN THAT
SECTION, JUST LOOK FOR THEM!
THAT IS... IF THEY DON'T LOOK
FOR YOU FIRST! AND NOW THE
KAWT-KEEPEE WANTS! SEE YOU
LATER...

EVERETT! LOOK... WHAT THEY'VE
DONE TO ME!

UH-HUH
CHORE



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEY, HEY! GREETINGS, *BOLD AND BONES*! WELCOME ONCE AGAIN TO *THE VAULT OF HORROR*! COME IN AND RELAX... ON THAT MARBLE SLAB OVER THERE! THIS IS YOUR *HOST* IN *HOWLS*, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO RELATE ANOTHER TERROR-TONE FROM MY FABULOUS COLLECTION! I CALL THIS ONE...

♪...GORILLA MY DREAMS!♪



YOUR NAME IS PHILIP STORKE! YOU'RE THIRTY-THREE YEARS OLD... MARRIED... WITH TWO KIDS... A MORTGAGED HOME... AND EVERYTHING TO LIVE FOR! THIS MORNING, AS USUAL, YOU GULPED DOWN YOUR BREAKFAST, KISSED YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN GOOD-BYE, AND RUSHED OFF TO CATCH THE BUS.

GOOD-BYE, BEAT! BE HOME EARLY TONIGHT! THE LAWN NEEDS MOWING!

"LONG? I'LL TRY!"



IT WAS A MORNING LIKE ANY OTHER MORNING FOR YOU, PHILIP STOKER! YOU RAT IN YOUR USUAL SEAT ON THE TRAIN, READ YOUR USUAL PAPER... AND ARRIVED AT YOUR OFFICE PROMPTLY AT NINE.



GOOD MORNING, MR. STOKER! THERE'S SOMETHING WAITING TO SEE YOU!

GOOD MORNING, MISS TRUMBLE! ALL RIGHT! I'LL SEE HIM IN A MOMENT!

MISS TRUMBLE SHOWED THE STRANGER INTO YOUR OFFICE AND LEFT! HE STOOD THERE, STARING AT YOU... HIS EYES BEAMING! HE NODDED HIS HEAD SEVERAL TIMES AS IF CONVINCING HIMSELF OF SOME SILENT SECRET...



YES, MISS WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

YES! YES! MR. STOKER! YOU WILL DO *MYSELF* VERY NICELY, *INDICED*!

AND THEN HE SWUNG TOWARD YOU, THE NEEDLE-LIKE HYPODERMIC SPRINGS GLITTERING! YOU CRIED OUT AS ITS POINT PERCUT YOUR SLEEVE, THE WARM FLUID EMPTYING INTO YOUR ARM...



THAT WAS THE LAST THING YOU CAN REMEMBER, PHILIP STOKER! JUST THE BLACKNESS BEHINDING IN... REACHING OUT AND COVERING YOUR EYES WITH VELVET HANDS! BUT NOW, YOU ARE COMING TO THE LIGHT OVERHEAD BURNS YOU! YOU HAVE AN UNBEARABLE THROBING PAIN IN YOUR HEAD! HE... THAT STRANGER... SENDS OVER YOU...



MR. STOKER! MR. STOKER, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

THE COBBLESTONES PULLING YOUR VISION ARE SWIFT AWAY! THE BLURRED FACE BEFORE YOU COMES INTO FOCUS! HE SMILES AT YOU! YOU TRY TO RISE...



DON'T bother trying to get up, Mr. Stoker! You are well-strapped! I cannot take any chances! Allow me to introduce myself! My name is Doctor Heinrich Morbar! I am a brain surgeon...

YOU LOOK AND URG! YOU ARE IN SOME SORT OF LABORATORY! YOUR ARM IS CLAMPED TO A SQUIGGLE OF INTRICATE EQUIPMENT! NEARBY, A FORM LIES MOTIONLESS ON A TABLE, COVERED WITH A WHITE SHEET! A BODY...



I LED YOU FROM YOUR OFFICE AS ONE LEADS A CHILD, MR. STOKER! THE SPIN I INJECTED INTO YOUR BLOODSTREAM COMPLETELY DESTROYED YOUR WILL-POWER!

YOU TRY TO BREAK! THE THROBING IN YOUR BRAIN THROBBES IN A HYPERBOLIC YOUR LIFE-CONSCIOUS BUT ONLY A LOW, SMOOTHER GROWL, STARTS FROM YOUR THROAT...

[THIS, MR. STOKER, IS MY GROWING ACHIEVEMENT, MY GREATEST MOMENT OF GLORY! FOR I... HEINRICH MORBAR, HAVE DONE WHAT SCIENCE SAID NEVER COULD BE DONE! I HAVE SUCCESSFULLY TRANSPLANTED A HUMAN BRAIN!



A COLD KNIFE-BLIDE OF FEAR SLIDES DOWN YOUR SPINE. PHILIP STOKER? YOU GLANCE, TERRIFIED, AT THE COVERED BODY LYING MOTIONLESS BESIDE YOU? DOCTOR MORGAN FOLLOWS YOUR GLANCE, REACHES OVER, AND FLINGS BACK THE WHITE SHEET.



"NO! YOU WANT TO SCREAM! NO!" BUT ONLY THAT ANIMAL-LIKE HOWL EXPLODES FROM YOUR THROAT? YOU TUG AND STRAIN AT THE STRAPS THAT HOLD YOU... TRYING TO TEAR YOURSELF LOOSE.



NOW, CALM DOWN, MR. STOKER? CALM... DOWN.

SUDDENLY, LIKE SO MANY BANDS OF TISSUE PAPER, THE STRAPS PART.



WHY? NO? WHY... WHERE... YOU... OOOOHH.

THE LABORATORY IS FILLED WITH A BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM... AN INHUMAN SCREAM... WILD AND ANIMAL-LIKE... A SCREAM THAT YOU YOURSELF, PHILIP STOKER, HAVE JUST HEARD.



YOUR BRAIN, MR. STOKER, HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY TRANSPLANTED INTO THE BODY OF A FULLY MATURE AFRICAN GORILLA...

THE MAN DOCTOR BEFORE YOU SLUMPS TO THE FLOOR, GASPING.



BY... HEART.

HE TWISTS GROTESQUELY IN PAIN, STIFFER... THEN IS STILL? YOU BEND OVER HIM, ANXIOUSLY... FINALLY FALLING TO YOUR KNEES AND PLUGGING YOUR EARS TO HIS ORCHES.



HE... HE'S DEAD?

YOU STAND UP... BREATHING UNSTEADILY? YOU LOOK AROUND, PANIC-STROKEN? YOUR GLANCE FALLS ON THE PARTIALLY COVERED GOLD WHITE CORPSE ON THE OPERATING TABLE... FOUR CORPSES? YOU STUMBLE TOWARD IT, MOANING? YOU THROW YOURSELF AGAINST ITS CHEST, GORGING LIKE A BAY...



FINALLY, YOU BACK AWAY FROM YOUR BODY. STARING DOWN AT ITS PALE, WHITE FACE.

NOT! NOT! THIS IS SOME SORT OF HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE! I'LL AWAKEN SOON... AND EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT!



NO, PHILIP STOKER! THIS IS NO HORRIFIC NIGHTMARE! THE STINGING PAIN OF THE NEEDLE TELLS YOU THAT.



THE NEEDLE IS REAL, PHILIP! THE LABORATORY IS REAL! THE DOCTOR, YOUR BODY! GOD! EVERYTHING IS REAL! LOOK INTO THE MIRROR, PHILIP STOKER! SEE FOR YOURSELF!



HYSTERIA TAKES HOLD OF YOU. THE SUDDEN, SCREAMING HYSTERIA OF HELPLESSNESS! YOU STUMBLE TO YOUR BODY... TO THE BODY OF PHILIP STOKER. AND WHATEVER IT IS... IT'S YOURS!



NOT TO GET HELP! NOT TO GET MY SHIRT PUT BACK WHERE IT BELONGS! NOT TO...

...AND THEN YOU'RE RUSHING HEADLONG DOWN A LONELY, DARK COUNTRY ROAD... CARRYING YOUR DEAD BODY IN YOUR ARMS... SCREAMING FOR HELP! CALL YOUR SHOUTS ECHO INTO THE NIGHT AS DISMAL FRIGHTENING HOWLS.



FINALLY YOU STOP RUNNING! YOU STAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD, GASPING FOR BREATH... GROWLING! WHERE ARE YOU GOING, PHILIP STOKER? WHAT CAN YOU ACCOMPLISH? CAN YOU TALK? CAN YOU TELL ANYONE WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU? WHAT, PHILIP! THINK! LOOK! A CAR IS COMING! SEE THE HEADLINE BEAMS REACHING INTO THE BLACKNESS AHEAD OF YOU... DOWN THE ROAD...



THE CAR'S SHARP BOREAL SHRILL AS IT SKIDS TO A STOP BEFORE YOU! A POLICE CAR! YOU CAN HEAR THE OCCUPANTS' ANXIOUS VOICES...



HOLY GOD, HARK! IT'S THAT MISSING GORILLA!

IT'S KILLED SOMEBODY! LET'S GET IT.

THEY'RE LEAPING FROM THE CAR, PHILIP! THEY'VE
DRAWN THEIR GUNS! RUN! RUN! DROP YOUR BODY
AND RUN! THEY'RE SHOOTING AT YOU!



AND NOW YOU'RE THAT GORILLA,
PHILIP! YOUR BRAIN IS IN ITS
BODY! AND IF YOU'RE NOT CARE-
FUL, THEY'LL SHOOT YOU!



ARE YOU ALIVE, PHILIP STOKER? ARE YOU?

GLORIA! I'VE GOT TO
LET HER KNOW...SOMHOW...



A MISSING GORILLA? THEY THINK YOU'RE A
MISSING GORILLA? DIDN'T YOU READ ABOUT
THAT, PHILIP? DIDN'T YOU READ ABOUT IT IN THE
NEWSPAPERS THE OTHER NIGHT?



YOU WATCH THEIR BACKTRACK CUT
TO THE ROAD AGAIN! YOU PAD
AFTER THEM, HIDE BEHIND A BUSH,
AND WAIT!



YOU WATCH AS THEY LIFT THE BODY AND PLACE
IT IN THE PATROL CAR! AS SOON AS THEY ARE OUT
OF SIGHT, YOU START OFF THROUGH THE WOODS...



NOT TO GET HOME! NOT TO GET HOME!

AFTER WHAT SEEMS LIKE HOURS OF CUTTING CROSS-COUNTRY, SUCKING INTO DEEP SHADOWS... AND SEALING FENCES, YOU REACH YOUR HUSBAND'S HOME...



THERE'S...THERE'S A LIGHT ON!

YOU SLIP AROUND TO THE BACK AND PEER THROUGH THE WINDOW! INSIDE, GLORIA SITS SOBBING IN A CHAIR! THE CHILDREN ARE THERE...AND GLORIA'S MOTHER AND FATHER ARE COMFORTING THEM...



I'M...I'M TOO LATE! THEY'VE FOLD HER ALREADY!

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW, PHILIP? YOU CANNOT TALK! EACH WORD COMES OUT AN APE-LIKE BELLOW...



WRITE? I'LL WRITE A NOTE/PAPER...PENCIL...

IN THE CAR? THERE'S A PENCIL AND A PAD IN THE GLOVE COMPARTMENT? YOU KEPT IN THERE TO RECORD GAS EXPENSES? YOU SLIP INTO THE GARAGE...



I'LL TELL HER EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED! I'LL...I'LL...

AND THEN YOU LOOK INTO THE CAR MIRROR! YOU LOOK AT YOUR HARRY HORRILLA FACE... THE RED, BRADY EYES... THE FRANKED, CRUELLY-DRAWN MOUTH...



BUT...BUT WHAT GOOD WOULD IT DO? WHAT COULD THEY DO FOR ME?

THAT'S RIGHT, PHILIP! WHAT COULD THEY DO FOR YOU? YOUR HUMAN BODY LIES IN A FUNERAL PARLOR, JERRED WITH BLOW-UP MUFFERS! ALTHOUGH REVEREND MORGAN LIES DEAD ON HIS LABORATORY FLOOR...



I...I COULDN'T EXPECT HER TO...TO TAKE ME AS I AM!

AND SO, SADLY, YOU SLIP THE PENCIL AND PAPER BAG IN THE GLOVE COMPARTMENT AND YOU PAD AWAY ON THE ROAD...



THERE'S...THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO!

AND SO, AS DAWN BREAKS OVER THE CIRCUS GROUNDS, YOU SLIDE THE BOLT OF THE EMPTY GORILLA CAGE OPEN AND YOU CLIMB IN...



ALL DAY LONG, AS THE CIRCUS MOVES FROM TOWN TO TOWN, YOU SIT CROUCHED IN YOUR CAGE, STARING OUT AT THE HUMAN BEINGS WHO DRAG BY BEFORE YOU...



AND THEN ONE DAY, YOU SEE THEM AGAIN... AND THE FEAR... MOVES THROUGH THE CIRCUS MEMBERS...



SOON, THE CIRCUS ANIMAL-KEEPER BEGINS TO MAKE HIS ROUNDS! SUDDENLY, HE SEES YOU.



THEY LOOK UP AT YOU... YOUR CHILDREN? THEY LOOK UP AT YOU WITH ANGRY EYES...



FOR A LONG MOMENT, GLORIA STARES AT YOU... STARES INTO YOUR DEAD EYES! A FLICKER OF RECOGNITION SEEMS TO BRIGHTEN HER PALE AND DRAVEN FACE! BUT SUDDENLY IT IS GONE! SHE TURNS AWAY! YOU CLUTCH THE BARS OF YOUR CAGE, DRAW YOUR BLACK LIPS BACK, REVEALING YOUR ORGEL, YELLOWED FANGS, AND YOU SHRIEK...



IT IS A SHRIEK OF UTTER RESIGNATION, PHILIP STOKER! A SHRIEK OF EMPOWERMENT! THE BODY HAS WON! YOU ARE A GORILLA!

HEY, HEY! ANYBODY CARE FOR A BANANA? THAT'S THE FRUIT WITH APPEAL! APE APPEAL! BY THE WAY! NEXT TIME YOU SEE A GORILLA, BE KIND TO HIM, EHY! HE MAY BE PHILIP! AND NON-PHILIP, I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO THE OLD BITCH!



THE OLD WITCH'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

HEL, HEL! AND NOW IT'S TIME FOR ANOTHER TERROR TALE FOR
FIFTY TYPES...ANOTHER CHILDISH CHILLER! I CALL THIS ONE...

A LIKELY STORY!



ONCE UPON A TIME...LONG, LONG AGO...THERE WAS
A TINY KINGDOM WHICH WAS RULED BY A CRANKY
OLD QUEEN. ONCE UPON A TIME THERE HAD BEEN AN
OLD KING, TOO, BUT HE'D BEEN LAID TO REST BEFORE
OUR STORY TOOK PLACE...DRIVEN TO HIS GRAVE BY
THE CRANKY OLD QUEEN'S CONSTANT NAGGING AND
SCOLDING. SO NOW THE KINGDOM WAS RULED BY
THE CRANKY OLD QUEEN ALL BY HERSELF...



"Y-YES, YOUR
MAJESTY!"

I'M READY FOR MY FIFTING.
HAVE YOU FINISHED THE
BOMMY?

FOR YOUR MAJESTY,
I'LL FETCH IT,
YOUR MAJESTY...



NATURALLY, THE CRANKY OLD QUEEN'S PALACE STUFF DESPISED HER. ALL SHE EVER DID WAS YELL AT THEM AND COMPLAIN. SHE WAS NEVER SATISFIED WITH ANYTHING THEY DID... LIKE THE POOR SEAMSTRESS, FOR EXAMPLE...



WHAT? YOU CALL THIS **FINISHED?**! LOOK HOW IT **FITS ME... HERE... AND HERE!** IT'S **TERRIBLE... TERRIBLE!**

I... I'LL TRY TO **FIX IT**, YOUR MAJESTY.

TRY TO **FIX IT**? YOU **BETTER FIX IT**, OR I'LL HAVE YOU THROWN INTO THE **SEAMST**, **STARVEST HUNGER** I HAVE.

Y-YES, YOUR MAJESTY. WHO'D I STILL, YOUR MAJESTY, WHILE I **FIX IT UP...**



BUT OF COURSE IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE POOR NERVOUS SEAMSTRESS TO **FIX UP** THE QUEEN'S DRESS CORRECTLY WHILE THE OLD MAN WAS YELLING AT HER, THREATENING HER, INSULTING HER...

AND THIS IS YOUR **LAST CHANCE**, YOU **CLUMSY STUPID NEEDLE-POUNDER!** IF MY **LAST** FITTING ISN'T BY **LAST**, I'LL... I'LL...

Y-YES, YOUR MAJESTY! PLEASE! HOLD STILL SO I CAN **FIX...**



OF COURSE, I COULD **END** THIS BORN FAIRY TALE BY TELLING YOU THAT ONE DAY, IN A FIT OF TEMPER, THE POOR SEAMSTRESS FINALLY **GRABBED** THE OLD CRAB AND **SEWED HER MOUTH SHUT...**

AND THEN **STOOD** HER ON THE **FLEETING STAND...**



AND **STUCK** POINT IN HER UNTIL THE CRANKY OLD MAN WENT **OUT OF HER MIND...**



...BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED. THE POOR SEAMSTRESS DON'T HAVE THE COURAGE (ALL SHE COULD DO WAS LISTEN TO THE QUEEN'S RAVINGS... AND **DREAM** ABOUT DOING THOSE THINGS...

...AND YOU'D BETTER **SEE TO IT THAT...** THAT... **ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?**



Y-YES, YOUR MAJESTY!

THEN THERE WAS THE ROYAL INTERIOR DECORATOR. SHE TOO WAS CONSTANTLY BEING CRITICISED AND SCOLDED AND THREATENED BY THE CRANKY QUEEN...



ROYAL INTERIOR DECORATOR!

Y-YES YOUR MAJESTY.

WHAT DID I *FEEL* YOU ABOUT THAT *BARE WALL* THERE? I *TOLD* YOU I WANTED SOMETHING *ON IT... ANYTHING...* TO BREAK UP THAT BARE MONOTONY!

Y-YES, YOUR MAJESTY. I... I'D LIKE TO *SHOW* YOU A FEW THINGS... IF YOU HAVE THE *TIME*!



I THOUGHT... PERHAPS... THIS TAPESTRE...

BAH! GULF! DON'T YOU HAVE ANY IMAGINATION?

THIS ORIENTAL BUS...

TERRIBLE!

PERHAPS... PERHAPS...

WELL? WELL? COME! COME! SAY IT! SAY IT! I HAVEN'T ALL DAY!

OF COURSE, I COULD *END* THE WHIM WHAM TALK RIGHT HERE BY TELLING YOU THAT ONE DAY, IN A FIT OF TEMPER, THE POOR CHASTISED INTERIOR DECORATOR GRABBED THE CRANKY OLD QUEEN AND HUNG HER ON THAT *BARE* CUTE WALL...

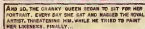


BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED. THE POOR GIRL DIDN'T HAVE THE COURAGE! ALL SHE COULD DO WAS LISTEN TO THE QUEEN'S RAVING... AND *DREAM* ABOUT DOING IT...



WELL? WELL? PERHAPS *WHAT*?

ER... AH... PERHAPS A *PAINTING* YOUR MAJESTY! A PAINTING OF... OF... OF YOU? A PORTRAIT?





OF COURSE, THE ROYAL SEAMSTRESS HAD A SEWING JOB TO DO ON THE ROYAL ARTIST'S DRESS...

ALMOST FINISHED,
ROYAL SEAMSTRESS?

TUM-TE-TUM... ALMOST
ROYAL ARTIST!



AND THE ROYAL INTERIOR DECORATOR FRAMED THE ROYAL ARTIST'S GAMES WITH GREAT CARE...

ALMOST FINISHED, ROYAL
INTERIOR DECORATOR?

ALMOST...



AND THE ENTIRE HARASSED AND RAGGED STAFF OF THE CRAZY QUEEN'S CASTLE CHEERED AS THE PORTRAIT WAS HUNG ON THAT BARE WALL...

GOOD SEWING JOB,
ROYAL SEAMSTRESS!

THE PERFECT THING FOR
THAT SPOT, ROYAL DECORATOR...

AMAZING LIKENESS,
ROYAL ARTIST!



[INDEED, THE ROYAL ARTIST'S PORTRAIT OF THE QUEEN WAS AN AMAZING LIKENESS. AND WHY SHOULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN? AFTER ALL, THE CRAZY OLD QUEEN'S HEAD HAD BEEN NEARLY SEWN TO THE GARNER...



HEE, HEE! AND THE ROYAL SEAMSTRESS, AND THE ROYAL DECORATOR, AND THE ROYAL ARTIST DIDN'T GET A SINGLE COMPLAINT ABOUT THEIR WORK THIS TIME, DID THEY? NOT ONE WORD! WELL, HEE, HEE... NATURALLY! THE QUEEN WAS IN NO POSITION TO OBJECT. SHE'D ALREADY LOST FACE! SO AFTER THAT, AS IN ALL FAIRY TALES, EVEN SEWING ONES, EVERYBODY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER! AND



AND NOW, THE GRUMPY-KEEPER WAITS WITH A TENDER LITTLE TALE OF ROBES AND REVELRY AND REVELRY! 'BYE, NOW!

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

WELL, HERE! SO NOW, IT'S YOUR *CRYPT-KEEPER'S* TURN TO AMUSE YOU, EMP! WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE! CRAWL INTO *THE CRYPT OF TERROR*! SIT DOWN ON THAT BAG OF GARDENING, AND I'LL TELL YOU A WARM-AND LITTLE TALE, ALL FLOWERY WITH PETIO STENCHES, THAT I AFFECTIONATELY CALL...

GARDEN PARTY!



LOUELLA AND GODFREY HICKS HAD BEEN MARRIED FOR ALMOST EIGHT YEARS! UNFORTUNATELY, LOUELLA, WHO LOVED CHILDREN DEARLY, HAD NEVER BEEN BLESSED WITH ANY... AND SO SHE'D BEEN FORCED TO FIND OTHER INTERESTS WITH WHICH TO OUST HERSELF IN THE LONG HOURS WHEN GODFREY WAS AWAY AT THE OFFICE! IN THEIR FIFTH YEAR OF MARRIAGE, LOUELLA HAD CONVINCED GODFREY TO BUY A SMALL HOUSE IN THE WOODS, AND HE'D CONSENTED.

HMM! THIS IS A PRETTY FLOWER, LOUELLA! WHAT IS IT?

DON'T TOUCH THAT! THAT'S ONE OF MY FAVORITE RUFFLED PETUNIAS!



YES! FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS, LOVELLA HAD DEVOTED ALL OF HER ENERGIES AND AFFECTIONS TO THE CULTIVATION OF THE PICTURESQUE FLOWER GARDEN AND LUSH GREEN LAWN THAT SURROUNDED THEIR SMALL, COTTAGEY HOME.



I... WAS ONLY TRYING TO SEE IF IT SMELLED PRETTY, LOVELLA!

WELL, KEEP AWAY FROM THE FLOWERS, GODFREY! YOU'LL RUIN THEM...

IN FACT, LOVELLA WAS ALMOST FANATIC ABOUT THE CONDITION OF HER GARDEN! EVERY DAY SHE WAS OUT IN IT, WEEDING THE YARDS AND YARDS OF FLOWER BEDS... PLANTING... TRANSPLANTING... SEEDING THE LAWN... MOVING THE LUSH... MAKING THE LAWN...



GODFREY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I'M BRINGING THE FLOWERS CHAIR OUT THERE! THINK I'LL TAKE A NAP IN THE SUN...



YOU'LL DO NO GOOD THING! THAT CHAIR WILL SMOTHER THE GRASS! DO YOU THINK I'VE WORKED AND SLAVED ON THIS LAWN JUST FOR YOU TO ABUSE IT?

ALL I WANT TO DO IS SIT DOWN AND TAKE A LITTLE NAP OUT HERE! LOVELLA!



WELL, YOU JUST TAKE THAT CHAIR RIGHT BACK ON THE PORCH! IF YOU WANT TO SLEEP, WE HAVE A BED-ROOM FOR THAT PURPOSE!

HONESTLY, LOVELLA! WHAT GOOD'S A LAWN IF YOU CAN'T ENJOY IT?



YOU CAN ENJOY IT BY LOOKING AT IT! YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIE ALL OVER IT!

A GUY GETS ONE DAY OFF A WEEK AND HE CAN'T EVEN STRETCH OUT ON HIS OWN LAWN. CRUEL! CRUEL!



GODFREY!

DOOM!



MY PRIZE PETUNIA! YOU STUPID, CLUMBY IDIOT! YOU STUPID, CLUMBY...

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, LOVELLA! AN ACCIDENT!

YES! LOUELLA WAS ALMOST PARANOID ABOUT HER GARDEN! AND JOSEPHET WAS MISERABLE BECAUSE OF IT! ONE DAY...

NOW WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I'M HANGING UP A HAMMOCK! A HAMMOCK WON'T SPOIL YOUR GARDEN! GRAB! I'M HANGING IT BETWEEN THESE TWO TREES... SEE? UP HIGH, OFF THE GROUND...

JOSEPHET HURRY! IF YOU DRIVE THAT NAIL INTO THAT TREE...

DEAR, LOUELLA! DEAR!

I'LL HOLD IT UP WITH ROPES!

YOU WON'T HANG IT UP AT ALL! I'LL WON'T HAVE IT SPOILING THE LOOKS OF MY GARDEN!

WHAT DO I CARE WHAT YOUR BLASTED GARDEN LOOKS LIKE? NEITHER! WHO SEES IT, ANYWAY?

WELL, YOU COULD INVITE SOME OF YOUR OFFICE FRIENDS OVER...

...AND I COULD SHOW IT TO THEM! OF COURSE, THEY'D HAVE TO BE CAREFUL...

THE BOYS AT THE OFFICE, EH...?

...AND THEIR WIVES, OF COURSE! THEIR WIVES WOULD BE INTERESTED, I THINK!

OH... THE BOYS WOULD BE INTERESTED, LOUELLA! VERY INTERESTED. YEAH! I'LL INVITE THEM... FOR NEXT SATURDAY!

THAT FRIDAY NIGHT

WELL, LOUELLA
DEAR! I'VE INVITED
A FEW PEOPLE
FOR TOMORROW!

I HOPE YOU TOLD
THEM ABOUT MY
GARDEN, GODFREY!
I MEAN...

OH, I TOLD
THEM **ALL**
ABOUT IT!

AND YOU DIDN'T
INVITE TOO MANY.
DID YOU, GODFREY?

NO, DEAR!
NOT MANY!
JUST TEN
OR TWELVE.

**TEN OR
TWELVE!**



COUPLES!

**GODFREY! TEN OR TWELVE
COUPLES!**
OH, DEAR! OH...DEAR...



FOR
DINNER?

**FOR DINNER! GODFREY! YOU
DIDN'T! DO YOU REALISE HOW MUCH
WORK IT IS TO MAKE DINNER FOR
TEN OR TWELVE COUPLES?**



OH, YOU WON'T HAVE TO
DO A **FAHNS**, LOUELLA
DEAR! I **BOUGHT** SOMETHING
THAT WILL
TAKE CARE OF
EVERYTHING! IT'S
OUT IN THE GAN!

SOMETHING THAT
WILL TAKE CARE
OF **EVERYTHING!**
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.



GODFREY WENT OUT TO THE CAR AND BROUGHT BACK A
HUGE BOX. HE BEGAN TO UNWRAP HIS MYSTERIOUS
PURCHASE.

WHAT, WHAT
IS IT?

IT'S AN **OUTDOOR BARBECUE**, LOUELLA!
I INVITED EVERYBODY TO A **BAR-
BECUE** IN THE GARDEN.



ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON, THE INVITED GUESTS BEGAN TO ARRIVE! LOUELLA WAS WHITE AS A SHEET WITH NERVOUSNESS! GODFREY GREETED THEM CHEERFULLY...



WELL... HOLLY! I'M NOW SOUND THE BELL! 12 AND EDITH ARE HERE ALREADY!

PLEASE BE CAREFUL OF THE ROSE BUSHES, PLEASE!

LOUELLA'S FRONT GARDEN WAS QUICKLY JAMMED WITH SHOUTING, LAUGHING PEOPLE...



HEY, STEVE! OVER HERE!

C'MON GODFREY! BRING ON THE FOOD!

LET'S HAVE SOME DRINKS FIRST, GODFREY BOY!

THEY THROBLED ABOUT MASHING DOWN THE LUSH GREEN LARVA...



WE'VE GOT OF JOE GODFREY, OL' KID!

IN THE KITCHEN, PHIL! THERE'S TWO MORE TRAYS!

NOTA CLOUD INNA SKY! WHA'TA GAY!

MY SNAP, DRAGON! PLEASE...

SMOKE BILLOWED UP FROM THE BARBECUE...



LOOK OUT, STUPID! TUN DUMPED THE ONAUGURAL!

MAKE MINE WELLS DONE, GODFREY!

LOOKA ME? I'M A BATTLE!

STOP! MY LIL' ARMY!

EVERYBODY WAS HAPPY! EVERYBODY BUT LOUELLA...



THAT BOTTLE'S EMPTY!

WINE FLASKE FOR GET HERE, GODFREY 'OL BOY! BOY!

GRAND... TO THE HOSTESS WITH THE AGONY...



MY PRIZE PETUNIA! CHOKLE...

LOOK, EY'Y'BOY! I BEING MY PORTABLE PHONE... NO... PHONE... NO... VICTROLA!



LETH DANCE!



SUDDENLY, POOR LOUELLA'S EYES FILLED WITH TEARS? SHE FAIRLY SHRIEKED.

MY, MY, SOH...
GARDEN!



GODFREY GRINNED SARCASTICALLY AT HER.

THAT'S THE *FIRST* TIME I'VE ENJOYED THIS PARRY-PLOT SINCE WE MOVED IN!

L-LOOK, LOOK AT IT!
ROINED! RUINED!



LOUELLA STARED AT GODFREY WITH WILD, RED EYES.

THAT'S WHAT A GARDEN'S FOR! TO ENJOY IT! LIKE... LIKE BARBECUING IN IT!

YES...
BARBECUING!



SHE MOVED TOWARD HIM, WHIMPERING AS SHE PRESSED THE BARBECUE WITH THE RED HOT COALS STILL BLOWING IN IT. LOUELLA PICKED UP THE CARVING KNIFE.

BARBECUING IN IT? YES...

LOUELLA!



LOUELLA!



WHEN THEY CAME TO INVESTIGATE THE BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS THAT HAD EMANATED FROM THE RUINED GARDEN, THEY FOUND LOUELLA. THE APRON TIED AROUND HER BEAVING BODY, THE CHEF'S HAT TILTED CRABBY ON HER PERSPICING FACE. BUSILY TURNING RIGHTLY MOWNED ODD SHAPES ON THE BARBECUE GRILL? AND SHE WAS MUTTERING SOFTLY

YES! YES! THAT'S WHAT A GARDEN'S FOR! TO BARBECUE IN IT. EH. EH. EH.



HEARD! THAT'S MY MARK, YELP-FRIENDS! GODFREY WAS DONE UP AROUND! WELL, THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED WHEN ONE'S A REGULAR OFF-DUTY FOR LOUELLA... WELL, SHE'S IN A PADDLED BELL NOW! SHE KEEPS STICKING ORANGE PITS INTO THE WALLS... AND SHE WATERS THEM REGULARLY... BUT NOTHING COMES OFF NOTHING EXCEPT HER DARNED

EVERYTHING. THEY SERVE HOT SHOVED FOOD? NOH, NOH! I'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY HALL, TALKS FROM THE GIFT? YEH, NOH!





The Old Witch

**F
E
A
R**

THE HAUNT OF

**NO.18
APRIL**

FEAR

**DEPRINT
EDITION**

FEATURING...



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER

IN THIS ISSUE:

E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY

RAY BRADBURY

AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!

**PIPE DOWN
BEDTIME GORY
POT SHOT!
THE BLACK FERRIS**

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HELLO, MEET US YOU GOT YOUR *BRIMMY PAPER* ON ANOTHER *INSANE* ISSUE OF MY *FEELING BAD*, WELL, HOP INTO THE *MAVINE* *ARMCHAIR*, THIS IS YOUR *HORROR*, THE OLD *MOTEL*, IT'S YOUR MY *GROSSLY* *CAULDRON*, BEHOLD ANOTHER OF MY *MORNING* *MEALS*, THIS *REVOLTING* *SCENE* IS ONE OF MY *FAVORITE*, SO FLING DOWN ON YOUR *USUAL* *SUNNY-SEAT*, TAKE YOUR *DRUG* *GUMS* UNDER YOUR *CHARTERED* *CHINS*, KNOT YOUR *HAPPEN* *AROUND* YOUR *MURDER* *NECKS*, AND I'LL FEED YOU THE *POOR* *PAVE* I CALL...

PIPE DOWN!

LILA LOOKS AT ANDREW WITH CONTEMPT. SHE HATES THE OLD MAN. THIRTEEN YEARS AGO SHE'D MARRIED HIM FOR HIS MONEY. ANDREW'S BEEN FORTY-SEVEN THEN. LILA'D BEEN TWENTY-ONE. BUT NOW, LILA HAS THIRTY-FOUR. LOVE HAS ALMOST PASSED HER BY. SHE LOOKED AT ANDREW SITTING THERE IN HIS PRUG-ITS CHAIR, SMOKING HIS PIPE UPSIDE-DOWN LIKE HE ALWAYS DID, READING HIS NECESSARY BOOKS OF POETRY, AND SHE KNEW WHAT SHE HAD TO DO...

ANDREW'S FIRE!
IT'S LIKE TO GO TO BED!

WELL BUT LILA AT ITS
ONLY NINE-FIFTY!
I HAVEN'T EVEN READ
HALF THE POEMS IN
THIS BOOK...

YES, LOVE HAD ALMOST PASSED LILA BY, BUT SHE'D REACHED OUT AND CAUGHT IT...CAUGHT IT THAT DAY IN THE CELLAR. LILA GOT UP FROM HER CHAIR AND STOOD OVER ANDREW...

ARE YOU SURE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET UP THE STAIRS BY YOURSELF, ANDREW?

OF COURSE, MY DEAR. JUST LEAVE ME MY GARG.

HOWARD HAD RETURNED... AGAIN AND AGAIN! FINALLY, BY THE FURNACE, IN THE HEAT, THEY PLANNED ANDREW'S MURDER...

IT'LL LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT, BABY. YOU'LL HAVE HIS BONES AND YOU'LL BE FREE. IT'S THE ONLY WAY!

LILA MOVED UP THE STAIRS. SHE OPENED THE DOOR TO HER BEDROOM. HOWARD WAS WAITING...

EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?

YES. AS SOON AS HE'S FINISHED WITH HIS CURSED POETRY, HE'LL START UP...

THE CLOCK ON LILA'S NIGHT TABLE TICKED LOUDLY, WATCHING THE THROBBERING OF HER RACING HEART. THEY STOOD IN THE DARKNESS, SHE AND HOWARD, WAITING. DOWNSTAIRS, FINALLY, THEY HEARD A RAFFA...

HE'S EMPTYING HIS PIPE. HE'LL BE COMING UP SOON.

OPEN THE DOOR A CRACK SO WE SEE...

ANDREW SIGHED, CLOSED HIS BOOK OF POETRY, AND STRUGGLED TO HIS FEET PAINFULLY. HE REACHED FOR HIS GARG, GASPING WITH EACH TORTURING MOVEMENT...

OOOOOHHH... MY BACK!

HE HOBBLER ACROSS THE LIVING ROOM AND STARTED UP THE LONG FLIGHT OF STAIRS... SLOWER, PAINFULLY, HE CLIMBED ONE AFTER THE OTHER, STOPPING EVERY 10 FEET TO REST. WHEN HE'D ALMOST REACHED THE TOP, LILA'S BEDROOM DOOR FLEW OPEN...

THERE WAS A SPLIT SECOND CLEAR OF REALIZATION IN THE OLD MAN'S EYES BEFORE THEY PUSHED AND SENT HIM TUMBLING HEAD-OVER-HEELS DOWN THE STAIRS.

YAAAAAAHHH...

HOW? HE'NT LILA? AND... AND HIM... THE FURNACE MAN...

IT WAS AN ETERNITY BEFORE ANDREW REACHED THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS. HE LAY THERE MOTIONLESS. LILA STARED DOWN AT HIM, WHISPERING. HE MOVED. HOWIE



HOWIE DARTED DOWN THE STAIRS, KNEEL BESIDE THE OLD MAN, GRABBED HIM BY HIS SHOULDERS, LIFTED HIS HEAD AND



HOWIE STOOD UP, BREATHING HARD. LILA WAS AT HIS SIDE, KITCHING.



HEE, HEE, WELL, KIDDING, THERE YOU HAVE IT. THE FIRST PART OF OUR LITTLE SNACK. ANDREW FELL FOR HOWIE AND LILA'S LITTLE PLAY... DOWN TWENTY-FIVE STEPS TO HIS INEVITABLE DEATH. THE AMBULANCE CAME, FOLLOWED BY THE POLICE, AND THE VERDICT WAS... ACCIDENTAL DEATH. LILA WAS FREE. THE NEXT THING THAT HAPPENS IN OUR STORY TALE OF TERROR TAKES PLACE DURING LILA'S SO-CALLED PERIOD OF MOURNING. SHE WAS PASSING A PET SHOP WITH HOWIE ONE DAY, WHEN...



LOOK, HOWIE. LOOK AT THE CUTE LITTLE MONKEY. DON'T HE DARLING? OH, I WANT HIM. I WANT HIM FOR A PET. HE'S SO CUTE...

IT'S FOUR MONKEY, LILA. I CAN'T SAY NO P BUT, REALLY... A MONKEY??



THE PET STORE MAN GAVE LILA ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS NEEDED FOR CARING FOR THE MONKEY.



THAT NIGHT... ON LOOK, HOWIE... LOOK! HE'S GOOD LOOK... THAT'S WHAT HE IS! LOOK AT THIS. THE MONKEY WAS BORN THE SAME DAY THAT ANDREW... DIED? WHY, ALMOST TO THE MINUTE...

WHY DON'T YOU GALE HIM ANDREW AND HE DONE WITH IT?





I COULDN'T, HOWE!
THAN WHAT PEOPLE
WOULD SAY! I'M
SUPPOSED TO BE IN
MOURNING FOR
ANDREW!

LOOK, LILA,
IT'S BEEN
FIVE MONTHS
SINCE YOUR
HUSBAND'S
DEATH! WHEN
ARE WE GOING
TO BE MARRIED?



IT'S TOO SOON,
HOWE! PEOPLE
WILL TALK! WE
HAVE TO WAIT A
REASONABLE
AMOUNT OF TIME

REASONABLE?
HOW LONG IS
THAT?



SOON, MY DARLING!
SOON! HOW LONG
? WE COULDN'T?

LILA, BABY



NEE, NEE! NOW FOR THE THIRD PART OF MY SLOP SERVING, WEDDIES. THE NEXT ACTION TAKES PLACE ABOUT A MONTH LATER. LILA HAD BEEN PUTTING HOWARD OFF. STALLING HIM WITH DEMANDS THAT THEY BE MARRIED IMMEDIATELY. SHE'D INSISTED THAT IT WAS TOO SOON AFTER ANDREW'S DEATH. THAT IT DIDN'T 'LOOK GOOD'. SO HOWE WAITED... AND FURIED. ONE NIGHT, HE CAME TO VISIT HER. BY THAT TIME THE LITTLE MONKEY LILA'D BOUGHT HAD THE FULL RUN OF THE HOUSE...



I'M HURRY! EVERY TOO WAITING.
L. WHAT IS IT, HOWE?
WHAT'S WRONG?

THIS, LILA! THE
GIRAR BUTT! I
FOUND IT IN THE
ASH TRAY WHERE
IS IT?



GIRAR BUTT? I I DON'T
KNOW! IT MUST BE FOUND!

I DON'T SMOKE CIGARETS,
LILA. DO YOU FORGET? I
YOU'RE TWO-TIMING ME.



THE MONKEY'S HOME. HE MUST
HAVE BROUGHT IT IN... FROM
THE STREET. HOW COULD
YOU POSSIBLY SUCH A THING...
THAT I'D BE UNFAITHFUL?

I'M SORRY, LILA,
BUT IT'S BEEN
ALMOST SEVEN
MONTHS SINCE
ANDREW DIED. ISN'T
IT ABOUT TIME WE
WERE MARRIED?



SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER, HORIE CAME AGAIN TO VISIT LILA, SHE WAS LONG IN ANSWERING HIS KISS. SHE SEEMED FLUSTERED WHEN SHE OPENED THE DOOR...



THE WHIFF OF SMOKE CURLED UPWARD FROM THE LIT CHAIR IN THE ARM TRAY, ON THE COFFEE TABLE, TWO HALF-EMPTY GLASSES AND A BOTTLE OF LIQUOR SAT SILENTLY.



HOWIE STARTED UP THE STAIRS...

I WAS EARLY TONIGHT, HOWIE!
LELA! YOU DON'T EXPECT ME!
ME! YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD TIME!
WRONG!



ABOVE, LELA'S BEDROOM DOOR
CLICKED SHUT. HOWIE STARTED TO IT...

LOCKED! HE'S
IN THERE!



HOWIE BACKED UP FROM THE DOOR...

YOUR LOVER, LELA! HOWIE!
YOUR LATEST
SUGGESTION!



THE DOOR SPLINTERED UNDER HOWIE'S OPERATING. IT
SWUNG OPEN, THE BREEZE SUCKED IN THROUGH THE
SITS. A ROOM WINDOW STARRD THE CURTAINS...

HE GOT AWAY... OUT
THE WINDOW...



THE BED WAS UNMADE AND RUPPLED. HOWIE RUSHED TO
THE WINDOW AND STARED OUT INTO THE DARKNESS. THE
TRELLIS OUTSIDE WAS STRONG... STRONG ENOUGH TO
WITHSTAND GREAT WEIGHT. A MOVEMENT IN THE BURNER
CAUGHT HOWIE'S EYES...



THERE HE WAS!

HOWIE TORE BACK DOWN THROUGH THE HEDGE AND OUT
THE REAR DOOR. HE SEARCHED THE GARDEN BUT FOUND
NO ONE. THEN SOMETHING WHITE CAUGHT HOWIE'S EYE. HE
PICKED IT UP...

A MAN'S HANDKERCHIEF
SMELLING WITH LIPSTICK!



LELA BACKED AWAY AS HOWIE CAME IN THE DOOR. HIS
EYES BULGED... HIS FACE WAS CONTORTED... HIS LIPS
WERE DRAWN BACK IN A GRAD. SNARL...

IN YOU LEFT PUTTING ME
OFF AND ALL THE TIME
YOU WERE CHEATING ON
ME...

NO, HOWIE!
IT ISN'T TRUE!
I SWEAR IT!



HOWIE SNATCHED THE POKER FROM THE FIRE-PLACE AS HE CAME AT LILA.

I'M GOING TO KILL YOU,
LILA. KILL JOSEF AS YOU
MADE MY WILL
ANDREW...

HOWIE!
NO!
NO!



HOWIE BLOUNT THE POKER DOWN WITH ALL HIS BRUTE FORCE UPON LILA'S HEAD, CUTTING HER SCREAM TO A MURDEROUS SILENCE.

EEEEEE... G-G-G-H-H-L-G-H...



AGAIN AND AGAIN THE POKER FELL,
CRUNCHING BONE, MASHING BRAIN,
UNTIL, MEANLY, HOWIE FLUNG IT AT
THE PUFTY RED COCK BEFORE HIM.



THE OFFICER PUT HIS HAND ON
HOWIE'S SHOULDER.

BETTER COME ALONG
WITH ME, MISTER.



THEY WENT OUT... HOWIE BOWING
AND THE OFFICER SHAKING HIS HEAD.

THEY SENT ME AROUND TO INVESTIGATE. THE OPERATOR REPORTED
SOMEBODY LIFTED THE PHONE AND
SCREAMED INTO IT. SHE SAID IT
SOUNDED MORE LIKE AN ANIMAL'S
SCREAM THAN A HUMAN'S...



AFTER WHAT WAS LEFT OF LILA WAS SCRAPED UP FROM
THE LIVING-ROOM FLOOR AND THE CONSUMER AND DETECTIVES
WENT AWAY, A SMALL PUFTY BROWN MONKEY SCURRIED OUT
FROM THE BUSHES BEHIND THE HOUSE, SCUMBLED BACK
UP THE TRELLIS, INTO THE BEDROOM AND DOWNSTAIRS TO A
CERTAIN CHAIR. THERE IT GAWLED UP WITH A PIPE, UPSIDE-
DOWN, IN ITS MOUTH AND A BOOK OF POETRY ON ITS LAP,
AND IT SEEMED TO BE SMILING...



HEL, HEL? BELIEVE IN REINCARNATION, PLEASANT?
DO YOU KNOW THAT IN FIRST THE HIGH LAMA'S
SUCCESSOR IS CHOSEN BY SEARCHING FOR AN
INFANT BORN AT THE EXACT MOMENT THAT
THE OLD HIGH LAMA DIED? AFRICAN TRIBES
BELIEVE THAT THE SPIRIT, UPON DEATH, LEAVES
THE BODY AND ENTERS THAT OF AN ANIMAL'S
BEING BORN AT THE SAME MOMENT. SO, HOWIE
AND LILA MADE A MONKEY OUT OF ANDREW,
BUT HE GOT EVEN... DIDN'T HE? OF COURSE LILA
WAS INNOCENT OF BEING UNFAITHFUL... TO



HOWIE THAT IS
HOWIE JUST FELL FOR
SOME MONKEY BOP-
PING, AND NOW
THE NAUT-
KEEPER HUNTS WITH
HIS MONKEY DANCE
EYE, NOW.

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELL, HERE! AND NOW IT'S YOUR VAULT-KEEPER'S TURN TO GURGLE YOUR BLOOD, SO COME INTO THE RAFTS OF HORROR PAGES, SIT DOWN BEHIND ME AND I'LL NARRATE ANOTHER HAUNTING NOVELLETTE FROM MY CRAWLY COLLECTION. THIS LITTLE FLEP-YARN COMES TO YOU THROUGH THE COURTESY OF NIGHTMARE MATTRESSES, INC...MAKERS OF THE MATTRESS THAT SQUEEZES SCREAMS AND LETS YOU DROVE WITH MORE. I CALL THIS SPINE-TWEEZER...

BEDTIME GORY!



MILTON UNWISDOMED SLOWLY CHAINING TO HIMSELF, HE SLID INTO HIS PALMERS AND SAT DOWN ON THE FIRM MATTRESS OF THE FOUR-PORTER BED. HE STORED THE BEST DELICATE CARPINGS, ITS GLEANING FISHES IN THE NEXT ROOM HE COULD HEAR LOUANE'S GENTLE TOSSEING, HE STAYED.

STUPID WOMAN! FOR FIVE YEARS
EVE STEPPED ON HIM... ADDED HIM...
KATED HIM... USED HIM TO GET
WHERE I AM TODAY! AND STILL
SHE KEYS COMING BACK FOR
MORE...

SON...
SON...



MILTON LAY BACK AMONG THE SOFT FOLDS OF THE FOUR-POSTER'S BEDDING. HE CHUCKLED...



"TOMORROW, I'LL HAVE EVERYTHING! TOMORROW, I'LL BE JUMPING THE BRIDLE GOWN. I ALWAYS SAID TO BE A BIG STAR SOMEDAY! TOMORROW IS THE DAY!"

606... 606...

LORNA'S GIBBERING FROM THE NEXT ROOM STOPPED. MILTON CLOSED HIS EYES. YES, TOMORROW... TOMORROW WAS THE DAY. MILTON DOZED. IT WAS A COMFORTABLE BED AT THAT. LORNA'D GIVEN IT TO HIM. STUPID LORNA. FIVE YEARS HE'D DARED HER. NOW, HE WAS THUNDERING TOMORROW... TOMORROW... MILTON WAS ASLEEP.



"MILTON! MILTON? ARE YOU AWAKE?"

LORNA PIERCED AT HIM WITH RED, TEAR-FILLED EYES. SHE SLIDED ACROSS THE ROOM...



"YOU'RE ASLEEP! AREN'T YOU, MILTON? SOUND ASLEEP! NOTHING BOYDING YOU, ARE IT? NO GOODNESS! NO MERRITS. SOUND ASLEEP! WAITING! WAITING FOR TOMORROW!"

"YOU'LL GET WHAT YOU WANTED TOMORROW, MILTON. WHAT YOU ALWAYS WANTED. YOU'LL BE THAT BIG STAR YOU ALWAYS SAID YOU'D BE. THEY'RE GOING TO ELECT YOU PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY TOMORROW. PRESIDENT..."



LORNA REACHED OUT AND TOOK MILTON'S LIMP HAND. SHE STARED AT IT...



"REMEMBER WHEN WE MET, MILTON? YOU CAME TO WORK FOR US... AS OUR UNOFFICIAL! YOU WERE POOR... HANDSOME. AMBITIOUS! AND I WAS SO JEALOUS..."

"WE WERE WORLDS APART. I WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A RICH MAN, AND YOU... YOU WERE HIS SERVANT. BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP YOU, DID IT? YOU... YOU MADE LOVE TO ME... PROPOSED TO ME..."



"OH, MILTON, DARLING! TO MARRY YOU... IF I COULD! BUT YOU KNOW FATHER WOULDN'T GIVE HIS APPROVAL!"

"WE WOULD ESCAPE. WE WOULD ESCAPE. WE WOULD ESCAPE. THEN, AFTER I'VE PROVEN MY WORTH TO YOUR FATHER, WE COULD TELL HIM..."

"I DIDN'T KNOW THEN. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY WANTED. I WAS BLINDED BY MY LOVE FOR YOU. WE DROVE UPRIGHT AND FORGED A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE..."



"...I PRODUCE YOU MAN AND WIFE!"

"LORNA, DARLING!"

"OH, MILTON..."

"WE WERE SECRETLY MARRIED, FATHER NEVER KNEW. HE WAS KILLED BEFORE HE COULD TELL HIM. REMEMBER THE ACCIDENT, MILTON? YOU DROVE HIM INTO TOWN THAT DAY. YOU SAID THE SPARE TIRED ON THE CLIFF ROAD."

"YOU WERE THROWN CLEAN OFF THE WHEELS, BUT FATHER WAS TRAPPED. HE DIED INSTANTLY..."

"AND SUDDENLY, EVERYTHING THAT FATHER OWNED WAS MINE... MINE AND MY HUSBAND'S... MINE AND MINE, MILTON..."



"YOU TOOK OVER, DIDN'T YOU, MILTON. MY FATHER'S HOLDINGS... HIS STOCK IN THE COMPANY... YOU TOOK COMPLETE CHARGE..."

"FATHER HAD BEEN A MAJOR STOCKHOLDER IN THE COMPANY BUT THAT WASN'T ENOUGH FOR YOU, WAS IT? YOU WEREN'T SATISFIED WITH THAT. YOU WANTED IT ALL, THE WHOLE THING. YOU HATED DETESTED..."



"YOU STARTED YOUR CAMPAIGN... YOUR CAMPAIGN TO BURN CONTROL... IT WAS DIRTY. YOUR FEELINGS OUR USE, WALLOWING IN THE FILTH, BRINGING IT TO YOU..."

"YOU WENT TO SEE YOUR FIRST VICTIM. IT WAS SO EASY."

"HE'S MARRIED. WITH A FAMILY! BUT THIS ONLY STOPPED ME 40%! I'LL HISS MORE. KEEP AT IT!"

"NO! NO! MY REPUTATION! I'LL BE RUINED. YOU CAN'T DO THIS PLEASE. I'LL PAY YOU... ANYTHING!"



"WHAT COULD HE DO? HE WAS TRAPPED! YOU CLIMBED THE *FIRST* RUNG TOWARD THE TOP. HE TURNED OVER HIS STOCK TO YOU AND YOU PAID HIM, PAID HIM WITH MY DEAR FATHER'S MONEY..."



HOW COULD YOU DO IT, MILTON? IT WAS SO UNFAIR, SO CHEAP!

I GET WHAT I WANT, LORNA! I GET IT ANY WAY I CAN!

"AND THE DIRT CAME IN, REMEMBER THE *SECOND* ONE? HE HELD LESS THAN 4% OF THE VOTING STOCK, A MERE PITTANCE. BUT YOU WANTED IT. NOTHING WOULD STOP YOU, WOULD IT MILTON?"



W-HOW DID YOU FIND OUT? IT... IT WAS NO LONGER HOT!

I HAVE WAYS, MR. FORBES! IT WOULD WEAR ME OUT FOR YOU, IF I TOLD YOU, YOU OWN SOME SHARES OF STOCK.

"YOU CLIMBED UPWARD, DIDN'T YOU, MILTON? THE *SECOND* RUNG, 40%? YOU NEEDED 51%, YOU STOPPED ON THEM AND CLIMBED. NOW I FITTED THE *THIRD* ONE..."



HE KILLED HIMSELF, MILTON! HE COMMITTED SUICIDE!



HIS WIDOW WILL GO BUSINESS! SHE'LL HAVE TO!

"DO YOU WANT TO SEE HIM, PLEASE? DON'T TELL THE NEWSPAPERS. I... I CAN'T FACE MY FRIENDS... NO, MY FAMILY!"



THEY TELL ME THE STOCK, MR. STALEY, THAT'S ALL I WANT!

"BUT YOU GOT THREE PERCENT FROM MR. STALEY'S WIDOW. YOU WERE STILL SHORT. YOU STILL NEEDED TWO PERCENT, AND YOU WERE DETERMINED TO GET IT."



YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THIS, MILTON! YOU'VE GOT TO...

WEND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, LORNA. I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING...

"AND THEN YOU FOUND YOUR *FOURTH* VICTIM. YOUR PRIVATE SARGENT PICKED UP WITH THEM DIRT, AND YOU REINED YOUR HANDS IN..."



ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! HERE'S YOUR STOCK! NOW GET OUT, YOU DIRTY BLACKBAILER!

NOT BLACKMAIL AT ALL, MR. STALEY. I'M BUYING THREE SHARES. REMEMBER THAT! HERE'S YOUR CHECK!

"SO NOW YOU HAD IT, MILTON. YOU HAD YOUR CONTROL!" AND AT THE NEXT STOCKHOLDERS MEETING, YOU EXPLODED YOUR BOMB.

IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT, GENTLEMEN. I HAVE 50% OF THE VOTING STOCK? I DEMAND THE PRESIDENCY!



"I REMEMBER HOW FIERCELY SLEEPFUL YOU WERE, MILTON, AND THEN THOUGH I LOVED YOU, I HATED YOU FOR WHAT YOU'D DONE TO ALL THOSE PEOPLE."

I SAID TO BE A JOE MAN, AND NOW I'M GOING TO BE? NEXT WEEK THEY'RE GOING TO ELECT ME PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY!

AND YOUR DREAM WAS FINALLY BEING FULFILLED, DR. MILTON?



THAT'S RIGHT? I WAS SMART? I STOPPED OVER THE DEAD WOOD. I GOT TO THE TOP WHERE I BELONG?

WHERE WOULD YOU BE IF YOU HADN'T MARRIED ME? IF FATHER HADN'T BEEN KILLED?



TO HAVE LITTERED THEM ANYWAY, LORNA, WHATEVER I DO, I DO WITH A PLAN. WHY DO YOU THINK I MARRIED YOU?

BECAUSE YOU LOVED ME... AND I LOVED YOU...



HA! DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH! BECAUSE YOUR OLD MAN HAD DIED? AND HE HAD THAT STOCK?

YOU KNOW ABOUT IT... THE STOCK?

I CAME TO WORK FOR HIM BECAUSE OF IT? ONCE I WORKED FOR THE COMPANY... AS A TRUCK DRIVER? I WAS FIRED! I WROTE TO OWN IT SOMEDAY!

THEN YOU LIED TO ME. YOU NEVER LOVED ME! I WAS A STEP ON YOUR LADDER!

EXACTLY! AND FATHER? HE... HE WOULD HAVE DISCOVERED ME IF HE'D FOUND OUT I'D MARRIED YOU? BUT HE NEVER GOT THAT CHANCE. YOU... YOU KILLED HIM, DIDN'T YOU?





MILTON OPENED HIS EYES. LORNA STOOD OVER HIM...



MILTON LAY SPREAD-ARMED ACROSS THE FOUR-POSTER, HIS WRISTS AND ANKLES EACH SECURELY BOUND TO A POST.



LORNA BEGAN TO TURN A CRANK, SOMEWHERE INSIDE THE BED. A RATCHET CLICKED...



MILTON FELT HIS ANKLE PULLED... HIS LEG CRANK...



AND THEN, MILTON FELT THE TENDONS TEARING, THE MUSCLES SNAPPING, THE VEINS AND ARTERIES BURSTING AND HEARTPOUNGING. HE SCREAMED, HIS EYES, THE RATCHET CLICKED AS LORNA TURNED THE CRANK.



WHA, NOW THAT'S MY STORY, CHUCK. MILTY YELLED "OWIE!" THAT NIGHT, BUT LORNA KEPT "DOOM!" IT... TURNING THE CRANK THAT MY MILTY SURE WAS A BIG MAN WHEN THEY POURED HIM IN THE MORNING. HE WAS SPREAD FROM FLOOR TO POST, FOUR POSTS, OF COURSE! SOME NOSE BUT HAD A TAPE

MEASURE WITH HIM AND TOOK A MEASURING ARM-BOY WANT TO BUY A TWELVE FOOT LONG MAJORITY STOCKHOLDERS! I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO THAT MAN, THE OLD MAN, BEFORE SHE STARTS TO MAN SEE YOU NEXT IN THE GRIP-KEEPER'S BAR? SEE, NOW!





DECISION!

Through the heavily matted undergrowth he could see the clearing where the line of gnarled trees ended and the desolate swamp stretched off toward the murky horizon. The light was already beginning to fail; they would be after him with the bloodhounds in another few moments, as soon as they discovered he was missing from the prison lineup.

He had heard often, from other convicts, that the swamp was probably the only way to escape from the penitentiary . . . but none of the men actually knew of anyone who HAD gotten clear of the pursuing guards by taking to the swamp. Still, he thought to himself, his chest heaving from the exertion of scaling the prison wall and crouching and scrambling his way to the edge of the forest, *continuing on through the woods is just what the guards would WANT me to do! THAT way their hounds could track me down 'til I dropped from exhaustion!*

He heard a crashing in the undergrowth behind him, saw sudden shafts of light penetrating the low hanging branches in long searching arcs. They were close behind him now; he had only a moment in which to make his decision!

With a nervous glance behind him, he ducked low under the last fringe of branches and stepped unsteadily into the ooze of the swamp. Step by step, his breath whistling through his nostrils in frightened little dribbles, he moved out into the clinging mud. Step by step . . . the mud creeping up past his knees to his hips . . . he stumbled away from the forest into the inky darkness.

A finger of blue-white probed toward him. Without a moment's hesitation he scranched low, aware of the thick goo pressing against his chest and tickling against his throat. He crouched breathlessly, his chin buried in the mud, while the insistent light searched the swamp for him. Then the glare disappeared. He was shrouded again in darkness.

He permitted himself an audible sigh of relief. The guards were moving past the spot where he hid. Another few minutes buried here in the swamp and he'd be able to straighten up and creep out of the mud and back to the forest. Just a few more minutes . . . he'd allow himself *few more minutes* and he'd make his move!

* * * * *

The tall boney-faced guard flicked the switch and his flashlight went out. The two uniformed men stood together in the forest, peering out across the desolate swamp, while their dogs sniffed and scrambled in among the leaves on the ground.

The stocky guard slipped his pistol back into its holster and pulled his collar up closer to his chin. He turned away from the swamp and ducked back into the forest.

"I told you he'd never head for the swamp," he said over his shoulder, as he snapped the leash holding his brace of bloodhounds. "Let's keep going through the woods!"

"Yep" answered the taller guard, as he flicked on the light again . . . pointed, now, ahead through the trees. "Guess you're right! He's probably too smart to set foot in that swamp and wait for us to pass him by. Cause even if we DID miss him, he'd be sucked down into that stuff the very first time he tried to move out of that *quadrant*! It's happened to every escaped con who ever tried to make his getaway through the mud!"

THE OLD WITCH'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

WELL, HERE'S ANOTHER RAUCOUS, RAMPANT, RAMPANT, RAMPANT! A TERRIFIC
TALE FOR TEENY TYRES. A CHILDISH CHILLER. I CALL IT...

POT-SHOT!



ONCE UPON A TIME... LONG, LONG AGO... THERE LIVED A
VERY WEALTHY FRENCH NOBLEMAN NAMED BRUNO, DUKE
OF BELMONT. NOW THIS HIGH DUKE HAD A SON NAMED
ARNO. ARNO WAS IN HIS TWENTIES AND VERY NICE.

FATHER, I'M TAKING THE COACHEY!
I HAVE A HEAVY DATE WITH A
FRENCH WENCH!

ALL RIGHT, ARNO
BUT DO DRIVE SLOWLY
THROUGH TOWN TOMORROW!
LAST NIGHT YOU
KILLED TWO CHICKENS
AND A PEASANT CHILD.

...AND YOU KNOW HOW
FOND I AM OF CHICKENS!

AND YOU KNOW HOW
FOND I AM OF HIGH SPEED
FATHER... BECAUSE FATHER'S
MEAS MUCH AS WHIPPING
THE TEAM... THE ROAD
SHOULDER NASTY BENEATH
THE WHEELS... THE WIND
WHISTLING IN MY EARS...
AND ME WHISTLING AT A
FRENCH WENCH.



ESPECIALLY FRED
ENGLISH! SOUTHERN
FRED CHICKEN! SOUTH-
ERN FRANCE, THAT
IS...

GOOD NIGHT,
FATHER. I
AM OFF...
TO MONKEY
WITH MY
MOMMY...

CAUTIONS,
HOW?

FATHER, I KNOW
THE FACTS OF LIFE...

DRIVING, I
MEAN?

HUNT OR? YES,
FATHER. I WILL DRIVE
WITH GREAT CAUTION!
AT TREMENDOUS
SPEED, OF COURSE...
BUT WITH GREAT
CAUTION.



OH, AMBOY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT
I'M GOING TO DO WITH YOU.
YOU'RE SO... SO WILD! SO...
SO UNRESPONSIBLE...

GIVE ME A FEARLY
ALLOWANCE, AND
NEW CASTLE, AND
I'LL BE ON MY OWN.
I'LL ACCEPT RE-
SPONSIBILITY!



AMBOY. DUCK! HER, HAS GONE WITH THE WIND. EVEN
HER COACH WAS SCREAMING DOWN THE CASTLE ROAD.
WHEN I LOSE MY COACHMAN OR...

FASTER, YOU FOOL, THAT
FASTER? FASTER!
HERE! GIVE ME
THAT WHIP!

THE HORSES ARE
WIDE-OPEN, NOW,
SIR!



OH... OH TOWARD TOWN, AMBOY'S COACH THUNDERED
THE HORSES BRISTLING AND PERFORMING... AMBOY'S WHIP
LASHING OUT...

WE'RE COMING INTO TOWN
NOW, SIR. DON'T YOU THINK
YOU OUGHT TO SLOW
DOWN?

SLOW DOWN? THIS IS
WHERE THE FUN BEGINS!



SABOTENLY, THE COBBLESTONES OF THE TOWN'S MAIN
STREET SWIFT UNDER THE HURLING CARRIAGE
WHEELS AND THE CLATTER BECAME INTO THE
MIST...

IT'S
AMBOY...

THE DUCK'S
SON...

OFF THE
STREETS!



THE TOWNFOLK SCATTERED IN ALL DIRECTIONS AS THE COACH ROARED INTO THE MARKET SQUARE.

LOOK OUT!

OLD PIERRE!

HE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET!



OLD PIERRE COULD NOT MOVE. HE WAS ROOTED WITH FEAR. THE COACH BORE DOWN UPON HIM...

EEEEEEEEAAAAAA AHHH!



THE COACH RUMBLED OFF INTO THE NIGHT. A TWISTED BROKEN BODY LAY IN AN EVER-WIDENING POOL OF BLOOD ON THE CORNICE-LEDGE.

OLD PIERRE!

HE'S...

DEAD?



THE TOWNFOLK STOOD ABOUT IN THE MARKETPLACE, CURSING.

THE DIRTY WHORE!

SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT THIS.

AMBOY'S RECKLESS DRIVING SHOULD BE STOPPED!



LATE THAT NIGHT, AMBOY RETURNED TO THE CASTLE. THE DUKE WAS WAITING FOR HIM.

WHY, FATHER? YOU'RE STILL UP? YOU... LOOK AMBOY?

I AM, BOY! I HEARD ABOUT YOUR SOJOURN INTO TOWN TONIGHT!



I... I LOST MY HEAD, FATHER!

YOU PROMISED YOU'D BE CAUTIOUS!



I COULDN'T HELP IT! SHE...

SHE? I'M TALKING ABOUT THE OLD MAN YOU KILLED!



OLD MAN! ON THAT? I WAS CAUTIONING, FATHER! NOT ONE UNFOREGO!

THIS IS THE END, AMBOY! I'M SENDING YOU OUT ON YOUR OWN! YOU MUST LEARN RESPONSIBILITY!



YOU MEAN I'M GOING TO GET A NEW CASTLE ALL MY OWN... AND A FEARLY ALLOWANCE?? HOW MUCH?



PAY ME IN GOLD WHAT I DESIRE, FATHER! THAT'S FAIR!

WHAT YOU MEANT IN GOLD IT'S A DEAL!



AS YOU CAN SEE, KIDDIES, MYER, DUKE OF MELANIA, WAS NO COPE. SORRY AMBOY COULDN'T HAVE WISHED MORE THAN 180 POUNDS OF GOLD WAS SETTING OFF LIGHT.



THE DAY YOUR NEW CASTLE IS READY, WE'LL HAVE THE MERRY-IN, AND EACH YEAR AFTER THAT, I'LL PAY YOU YOUR MERRY IN GOLD AS YOUR ALLOWANCE.

AT LAST, FATHER! I AM ON MY OWN... EARNING MY OWN WAY...

SO CONSTRUCTION ON AMBOY'S CASTLE WAS BEGUN. BUT AMBOY WAS NO COPE EITHER, KIDDIES. AMBOY STARTED EATING.



AMBOY! YOU'RE STOPPING YOURSELF! YOU'LL GET FAT!

YOU'RE SO RIGHT, FATHER! MORE FOOD, BRING MORE FOOD!

AND AS THE MONTHS WENT BY, AMBOY GOT FATTER AND FATTER, AND AMBOY'S CASTLE NEARED COMPLETION.



IT'S ALMOST DONE, AMBOY!

YUP! CHOMP... CHOMP...

AND THEN... FOUNDATION THE CASTLE WILL BE FINISHED AND WE WILL HAVE THE MERRY-IN, AMBOY! I MUST SAY, YOU'VE EARNED CONSIDERABLE MERRY SINCE I MADE THIS DEAL. HOWEVER, A PROMISE IS A PROMISE.



YUP! CHOMP... CHOMP...

COME, ARROY! THE
SCALE IS SET UP IN
YOUR NEW CASTLE'S
COURTYARD. LET'S GO!

POP! GO...
CHOMP...
FATHER,
I'LL MEET
YOU! DON'T
FORGET! I
WANT TILL
AND HONESTY!

GO AHEAD, HANG ON!
EAT ALL YOU WANT.
THIS IS YOUR LAST
CHANCE! TILL
MOMENT- THEN...

CHOP

AS SOON AS THE CLIMB WAS DONE,
JANOFF REVERTED TO A BEAR.

ONLY TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY POUNDS? NOT EXCUSE! WHAT COULD I EAT TO MAKE ME HEAVIER.

—SUDDEPLY JANNOT'S GLANCE FELL UPON THE LEAD WEIGHTS ON THE OTHER SCALE—BALANCE—

OF COURSE, LEAD. IF I COULD FILL MYSELF UP WITH ENOUGH LEAD I WOULD DO ANY AND EVERY HONORED HONORABLE THING BUT NOW

ARROW POINTED TO THE FLINTLOCK PISTOL, HANGING
OVER THE MANTLE...

OF COURSE! LEAD SHOT!
LITTLE ROUND LEAD BALLS
WOULD BE EASY TO SWALLOW!

THE REST OF THE DAY, ARMOY SPENT SWALLOWING THE CASTLE'S SUPPLY OF PISTOL SHOT. HE EXPIRED TWO WHOLE BARS...

GOLF... GOLF... GOLF... OH,
I'M FULL! BUT GOLF... *etc.*

1997

I CAN'T SWALLOW ANY MORE. I CAN HARDLY MOVE. I MUST WEIGH FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS. AND—AND—

THE CLOCK ON THE WALL SCREAMED AT AMBOY...

GOOD SNEEPT IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT! I'VE GOT TO HURRY!



AMBOY ORDERED HIS COACH HE DROGGED HIMSELF IN...

TO MY NEW CASTLE... GASP... AND... GASP... HURRY!



THE COACH STARTED OFF, AMBOY SCREAMED...

FASTER! FASTER! HERE... GIVE ME THAT WHIP...

YES, SIR!



ON TOWARD AMBOY'S NEW CASTLE, THE COACH THUNDERED... AMBOY'S WHIP LASHED OUT...

FASTER! FASTER!

GOOD LORD! LOOK!



THE TOWNSFOLK WERE WAITING, THE BARRIAGE STRETCHED ACROSS THE ROAD, AMBOY SHRIEKED, THE COACHMAN SLAMMED ON THE BRAKES...

STOP! STOP THE COACH! STOP... GOOD LORD...

I'M TRYING, SIR! THE BRAKES...



THE BRAKES HELD, THE COACH STOPPED SHORT. GASPING, THE ROAD BEFORE THE BARRIAGE WAS STREWN WITH LITTLE ROUND LEAD BALLS... MILLIONS OF THEM...

AMBOY, SIR! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SIR? ARE YOU... OH NO! LOOK... LOOK AT HIS STOMACH...

LINE SOMETHING TORN ITSELF OUT...



WELL, SHOT MAN MOUTH, RIGHT, IF AMBOY'S LOVE OF SPEED DIDN'T FINALLY SPELL HIS DO-DOING, THE BALLS OF HIS STOMACH'S UN-DOING, THAT IS WHEN THE COACH STOPPED SHORT, THE LEAD SHOT IN AMBOY'S TUMMY JUST KEPT ON GOING, ER... AMBOY FOR MAR-BLES! NOT TOO, TELL ON BY THE WAY AFTER THAT, AS USUAL, EVERYBODY LIVES HAPPILY EVER AFTER, THAT IS, UNTIL THE DOGE NOT

THE CLEVER IDEA OF TURNING AMBOY'S USED-UP NEW CABLE INTO A... SET THIS DOPE! YOU KNOW... THE ANGER-FOAM OF THE MOTEL-FOR COACHES, OR, THE REDDLESS DRIVING! AND NOW THE GUFFY-KEEPER WANTS TO RYND UP MY HAD... 'BYE.



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! SO, NOW IT'S THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S TURN TO BAIL YOU. FOR THE WIND-UP SPOT TO OUR MAN, I'VE CHOSEN A TALE BY **RAY BRADBURY**. SO COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR, SIT DOWN ON THAT TENT-SHAPED CHAIR, AND I'LL TELL YOU MY ADAPTATION OF MR. BRADBURY'S...

THE BLACK FERRIS!

THE CARNIVAL HAD COME TO TOWN LIKE AN OCTOBER WIND, LIKE A DARK BAT FLYING OVER A GOLD LAKE, BONES RATTLING IN THE NIGHT, MOUNTING, RISING, WHISPERING UP THE TENTS IN THE DARK RAIN. IT STAYED ON FOR A MONTH BY THE GREY, RESTLESS LAKE OF OCTOBER, IN THE BLACK WEATHER AND INCREASING STORMS AND LEADER SALES...



DURING THE THIRD WEEK, AT TWILIGHT ON A THURSDAY, TWO SMALL BOYS WALKED ALONG THE LAKE SHORE IN THE GOLD WIND...



WELL, I DON'T BELIEVE YOU HARK!

COME ON, AND I'LL SHOW YOU FETE!

PETER AND HENRY RAN TO THE LOVELY CARNIVAL GROUNDS. THE MERRY WAS SILENT, THE GREY TENTS WHEELED IN THE WIND LIKE SILENT PREHENSILE WINGS. AT EIGHT O'CLOCK PERHAPS, BRASHLY LIGHTS WOULD FLASH ON, VOICES WOULD SHOUT, MUSIC WOULD GO OUT OVER THE LAKE. BUT NOW, THERE WAS ONLY A BLIND HUNCHBACK SITTING ON A BLACK BOX —



THERE...

THE BLACK PERRIS WHEEL POSE LIKE AN IMMENSE LIGHT-BLASED CONSTELLATION AGAINST THE CLOUDY SKY, SILENT...

I STILL DON'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT THAT PERRIS WHEEL, HENRY.

YOU WANT, I SAW IT HAPPEN. I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT IT DOES. YOU KNOW HOW CARNIVALS ARE... ALL FOOLERY. ONLY THIS ONE'S EVEN FUNNIER.



PETER LET HIMSELF BE LIED TO THE HIGH GREEN MOON PLACE OF A TREE, SUDDENLY HEAR STEPPED.

WHEE! THERE'S MR. COCKER, THE ORIGINAL MAN, NOW!



MR. COCKER, A MAN OF SOME THIRTY-FIVE YEARS, DRESSED IN SHARP BRIGHT CLOTHES, A LAPEL CARNATION, AND A BROWN GENTY HAT ON HIS HEAD, DRIFTED UNDER THE TREE.



MR. COCKER NOOKED AT THE BLIND HUNCHBACK, SPOKE A WORD. THE HUNCHBACK BLINDLY FUMBLING, LOOKED MR. COCKER INTO A BLACK SEAT AND SENT HIM WHIRLING INTO THE ON-HOLD TWILIGHT SKY.

WHEE! THE PERRIS WHEEL'S BOWS THE SPINNING WALK, BACKWARDS INSTEAD OF FORWARDS?



THE BLACK PERRIS WHEEL WHIRLED TWENTY-FIVE TIMES AROUND. THEN THE BLIND HUNCHBACK PUT OUT HIS PALE HANDS AND HALTED THE MACHINERY. THE WHEEL STOPPED, BENTLY SHAKING, AT A CERTAIN BLACK SPOT, A TEN-YEAR OLD BOY STEPPED OUT.

THAT'S WHAT YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE! NOW, SEE? BUT, WHERE'S MR. COCKER?



THE TEN YEAR OLD BOY WALKED OFF ACROSS THE UNHOPPING CARNIVAL GROUNDS, INTO THE SHADOWS. PETER SEARCHED THE PERRIS WHEEL WITH HIS EYES FOR MR. COCKER...

WHERE IS HE? THAT'S WHAT COME ON? BURN! BURN!



HE HAD DROPPED FROM THE TREE AND WAS SPINNING BEFORE HE HIT THE GROUND...

THE LIGHTS WERE BURNING IN MRS. FOLEY'S WHITE MANSION, PIANO MUSIC THROBLED WITHIN THE WARM WINDOWS, PEOPLE MOVED OUTSIDE. IT SEEMED TO RAIN, OCCASIONALLY, IRREGULARLY, FORGETTILY, AND EVEN...

I'M SO SURE LIKE SOMEONE SQUISHED ME WITH A NOSE. HOW MUCH SUREDER DO WE WANT, HARRY?

I KNOW HIS NAME. MY MOTHER TOLD ME ABOUT HIM THE OTHER DAY.



THEY HAD FOLLOWED THE TEN YEAR OLD FROM THE FERRIS WHEEL, UP THROUGH TOWN, DOWN DARK STREETS TO MRS. FOLEY'S HOUSE. NOW, INSIDE THE WARM DINING ROOM, THE STRANGE LITTLE BOY SAT AT DINNER...

NOW SAID, "HARRY, YOU HEARD ABOUT THE LIL' ORPHAN BOY MENTIONED IN MRS. FOLEY'S TELL, HIS NAME'S JOSEPH WALTERSON AND HE JUST CAME TO MRS. FOLEY'S ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO AND ASKED FOR SOMETHING TO EAT, AND HIS AND MRS. FOLEY BEEN GETTING ON LIKE HOT APPLE HE EVER SINCE." THAT'S WHAT NOW SAID.

I'M SCARED, HARRY. I'M OLD AND WEAKLY AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS'S ALL ABOUT.



COOK, YOU'RE SCARED, HARRY? DON'T YOU SEE? THREE WEEKS AGO THE CARNIVAL CAME, AND ABOUT THE SAME TIME THIS LITTLE OLE ORPHAN KID SHOWED UP AT MRS. FOLEY'S. AND MRS. FOLEY'S OWN SON DIED A LONG TIME AGO, AND SHE'S NEVER SEEN THE SAME. SO HERE'S THIS LITTLE OLE ORPHAN WHO INFERS HER ALL AROUND...

OH?



THEY MARCHED UP TO THE FRONT DOOR AND LANGED THE HUSBAND KNOCKER, AFTER AWHILE THE DOOR OPENED...

YOU'RE ALL SET? COME IN, MY LAND? WHAT DO YOU WANT? YOU'RE HARRY WALTERSON, AREN'T YOU?

UH-HUH? CAN WE SEE YOU ALONE, M'AM?



HARRY BLANDED FEARFULLY AT THE DINING ROOM WHERE THE STRANGE LITTLE BOY LOOKED UP FROM HIS EATINGS. HE CROPT OVER AND SHUT THE HALL DOOR AND WHISPERED...

WE GOT TO LEAVE YOU. IT'S ABOUT THAT BOY COMING TO LIVE WITH YOU... THAT ORPHAN!

WELL?



THE HALL GREW SUDDENLY COLD. MRS. FOLEY DREW HERSELF HIGH AND STIFF.

HE'S FROM THE CARNIVAL AND HE AIN'T NO BOY. HE'S A MAN, AND HE'S PLANNING ON LIVING HERE WITH YOU UNTIL HE FINDS WHERE YOUR MONEY IS AND THEN RUN OFF WITH IT SOME NIGHT, AND PEOPLE WILL LOOK FOR HIM BUT BECAUSE THEY'LL BE LOOKING FOR A FEN YEAR OLD, MR. COCKER WILL GET AWAY.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ABOUT?



THE CARNIVAL... AND THE FERRIS WHEEL'S BEING BACKWARD. MRS. COCKER REMEMBER, I DON'T KNOW NOW, AND HIM COMING HERE AS A BOY, AND YOU CAN'T TRUST HIM, BECAUSE WHEN HE HAS YOUR MONEY HE'LL GET BACK ON THE FERRIS WHEEL AND IT'LL GO FORWARD AND...

GET OUT, HENRY WALTERSON! GET OUT AND DON'T EVER COME BACK!



THE DOOR SLAMMED. PETER AND MARK FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE RAIN ONCE MORE. IT SOARED INTO THEM, COLD AND COMPLETE...

SMALL BUT NOW WE HE YOU FIXED IT, SUPPOSE. **WOULDN'T HE HEARD US, SUPPOSE** DO THAT, HE COMES AND **KILLS** US IN OUR BEDS TOMORROW, TO **SAVE** US UP FOR **KEEPER**!



PETER GRABBED MARK'S ARM AND POINTED.

WOULDN'T HE LOOK?



IN THE BIG BAY WINDOW OF THE DINING ROOM NOW THE MESH CURTAIN PULLED ASIDE, STANDING THERE IN THE PINK LIGHT HIS HAND MADE INTO A WEREWOLF PIST, WAS THE ORPHAN BOY. HIS FACE WAS HORRIBLE TO SEE, THE TEETH BARED, THE EYES MAFEFUL.



DURING SUPPER, PETER LOOKED AT MARK AND SAID...

IF YOU DON'T EATCH **THE CARNAVAL**, I'LL BE **SURPRISED**. **SCARED**, YOU WERE, BY GOD! WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT THE **CARNIVAL**?

DO YOU KNOW ARE **COOKER**, THE **CARNIVAL** MAN, DAD?



THE ONE WITH THE **PINK CARNATION** IN HIS LAPEL? **SURE**, HE STAYS DOWN AT MRS. O'LEARY'S **BOARDING** HOUSE. GOT A **ROOM** IN THE **BACK**. **WHY?**

NOTHING BUT WAS **WONDERING** IF YOU **KNEW** HIM.



AFTER SUPPER, MARK PUT IN A CALL TO PETER. AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE, PETER SOUNDED MISERABLE WITH DOUBTS.

LISTEN, PETER! I SEE IT ALL NOW. WHEN THAT **LIL** OLE ORPHAN BOY, JOSEPH FIXES, GETS MRS. POLEY'S MONEY, HE'S GOT A **GOOD PLAN**.

WHAT?



HE'LL STICK AROUND TOWN AS THE **CARNIVAL**. **NOBODY** **WILL** **RELIEVE** US, MARK. I **TRIED** TO TELL MY **POLES**, BUT THEY **SAY** **HOW** **WASH**? **SO** WE GOT TO **ACT** **FAST**.

NOBODY **WILL** **RELIEVE** US, MARK. I **TRIED** TO TELL MY **POLES**, BUT THEY **SAY** **HOW** **WASH**? **SO** WE GOT TO **ACT** **FAST**.



WE GOT TO GET TONIGHT! BECAUSE IF WE DON'T HE'LL KILL US! WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO KNOW! I SET HE JUST JOKED SOMETHING TONIGHT. NO, I TELL YOU. MEET ME AT MRS. FOLEY'S IN HALF AN HOUR.



YOU WANNA DIE?

A-NO!



WELL THEN, MEET ME THERE AND I SET WE SEE THAT DUFFAN BOY BREAKING OUT WITH THE MONEY, TOMORROW MORNING BACK DOWN TO THE CARNIVAL GROUNDS WITH IT, WHEN MRS. FOLEY'S ASLEEP, I'LL SEE YOU THERE. SO LONG, PETE!



HANK HUNG UP HIS PHONE, STOOD BEHIND HIM.

YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE, YOUNG MAN. YOU'RE GOING STRAIGHT TO BED. C'MON! UPSTAIRS!

SAY, POP! AM, GEE...



HANK WAS MARCHED UPSTAIRS. HANK UNDERESSED, HIS FATHER TOOK HIS CLOTHES AND LOCKED HIM IN HIS ROOM. THE REST OF HANK'S WARDROBE HUNG OUTSIDE THE LOCKED BEDROOM DOOR IN THE HALL CLOSET.



PETER STOOD OUTSIDE MRS. FOLEY'S HOUSE, LOANIN A WET RAINCOAT AND MARINER'S CAP, BRILLING. FINALLY THERE WAS A RUSTLING IN THE NET BUSHES.

PEET! PETE! HEY! LEND ME YOUR PANTS! DID YOU WOULDN'T LET ME OUT!

GODDAMN, HANK! YOU'RE... YOU'RE NAKED!



C'MON! YOU'VE GOT THAT RAINCOAT OR, NOBODY'LL ALLOW SO LEND ME YOUR PANTS, BEFORE I GET PLAGUED!

WELL... ALL RIGHT!



THE RELUCTANT TRANSACTION WAS MADE. HANK PULLED THE PANTS ON. THEY WAITED...

THE RAIN LET UP... IN ABOUT TEN MINUTES, A SMALL FIGURE EMERGED FROM THE HOUSE, BEARING A LARGE PAPER BAG FILLED WITH SOME ENORMOUS LOT OF OTHER



They drive crash through the
onstant trees, up the hill,
through the night streets
of town, down past the railroad

WILLIS: [LAUGHING, PLATE]
WE CAN'T LET HIM GET
TO THAT PERFID WHEEL.
IF HE CHANGES BACK,
WE'LL NEVER PROVE
[LAUGHING]



THE ORPHAN BOY WAS SWIFT. PETER WAS LEFT BEHIND AS HANK THROGGED ON ALOE AFTER THE CARTING ORPHAN BOY NOW WADING INTO THE CARNIVAL GROUNDS...



PAUSE STOPPED AT THE EDGE OF THE GAMMEL LOT THE
FERRY WHEEL WAS BOMB UP AND UP INTO THE SKY,
AND THERE SAT JOSEPH PACE, LAUNCHING UP AND
AROUND, AND THE BLIND SUNDOWN HAD HIS HAND ON
THE REELING OIL MACHINE, AND EACH TIME THAT
JOSEPH PACE ROSE INTO THE SKY AND CAME DOWN
AND WENT AROUND, HE WAS A YEAR OLDER, HIS LAUGH
DEEPENING, HIS FACE DARKENING. [P. 10]



**HAVE MAN POWERS AT THE BLIND MEMORIAL OF THE
MACHINE ON THE WAY HE PLAYS UP A TEST SPOT...**

GOOD OF A



THE BUNCHBACK TRIED TO REACH THE BRAKE TO STOP THE FLEING WHEEL. HANK RAN IN AND SLAMMED THE GEAR AGAINST HIS KNEE, MAKING THEM...



THE FERRIS WHEEL WENT AROUND AND AROUND AND AROUND JOSEPH FIRES—MR. COOKER, FLUNG UP IN A SPORADIC GOLD SKY IN THE BUSSELED CONSTELLATION OF WHIRL AND FLUR AND WIND, SCREAMED. THE HUNCHBACK WITH MARK ON HIS CHEST, THUNDERING, BITING, SCREAMING... SPRAWLED...

THE FUTURE OF THE FUTURE

1997



MR. COOPER, A MAN, A DIFFERENT MAN AND WHEN THIS TIME, CRIED OUT, COMING AROUND IN PAINS, GOING UP INTO THE ROARING HEAVEN, SKY OF THE FERRIS WHEEL, THE WIND BLEW THROUGH THE HIGH DARK WHEEL, SPOKE...

STOP! OH, PLEASE
STOP THE WHEEL!



HANK LEAPED FROM THE SPRAWLING HUNCHBACK, HE STARTED IN ON THE BRAKE MECHANISM, HITTING ITS JAMMING IT, PUTTING SHUNKS OF METAL IN IT...

STOP! STOP! STOP THE WHEEL!
STOP...



THE VOICE PAID, NOW THE CARNIVAL WAS ABLAZE WITH SUDDEN LIGHT, MEN SPRAWS FROM TEXTS, CAME RUNNING, HANK FELT HIMSELF JERKED INTO THE AIR WITH OATHS AND SCREAMS RAINED ON HIM, A POLICEMAN APPEARED, PISTOL DRAWN...

STOP! STOP THE WHEEL!



THE VOICE REPEATED AND REPEATED, SHING AWAY IN THE WIND. THE DARK CARNIVAL MEN TRIED TO APPLY THE BRAKE, NOTHING HAPPENED. THE MACHINERY HUMMED AND TURNED THE WHEEL, AROUND AND AROUND, THE HIGH-ARCS WAS JAWED, THE VOICE CRIED ONE LAST TIME.

STOP!



THEN... SILENCE...

WITHOUT A WORD THE FERRIS WHEEL FLEW IN A CIRCLE, A HIGH SKEWER OF ELECTRIC STARS AND METAL AND SEATS, THERE WAS NO SOUND NOW BUT THE SOUND OF THE MOTOR WHICH DIED AND STOPPED, THE FERRIS WHEEL COASTED A MINUTE, THEN CAME TO REST, ALL THE PEOPLE RAZING UP AT IT...

LOOK!



THE POLICEMAN TURNED AND THE CARNIVAL PEOPLE TURNED AND THEY ALL LOOKED AT THE OCCUPANT IN THE BLACK PAINTED SEAT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RIDE, A SKELETON SAT THERE, A PAPER BAG OF BONEY IN ITS HANDS, A BROWN STRIP BAT ON ITS HEAD...

POOR LORD!

CHUCKLE...



HEHEHE! AND THAT'S THE STORY, KIDDER, THE WAY RAY WROTE IT, NOPE YOU LIKED IT, NOW IT'S TIME TO CLOSE THE OLD INTENSIO WAS, BEFORE YOU DREAM FROM THE GUTTS, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE MURDER! SHOULD HE LEFT NO STONE UNTURNED? HEH...

HEH! WELL, WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, TALKED FROM THE GUTTS, THERE'LL BE ANOTHER RAY BRADDOCK! TO FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT, 'BYE-NOW! SAY BOWEN!





The Old Witch

FEAR

HERE ARE TALES THAT WILL USHER YOU INTO

THE HAUNT OF



NO. 19
JUNE



10¢

FEAR[®]

FEATURING



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



UNATLEY

That is an actual
unretouched
drawing of
the real
thing!



LET US
PROVE
WHAT WE
CAN DO FOR
YOU!

TALES CALCULATED TO DRIVE YOU

MAD

HUMOR IN A
JUGULAR



THIS WAS MELVIN GOODMAN BEFORE
HE EVER HEARD OF MAD COMICS!
HE WAS A SKINNY, NORMAL AMERICAN
BOY! THEN HE GAMBLED TEN CENTS...



AND BOUGHT A COPY OF MAD
COMICS! HERE IS MELVIN GOODMAN
AFTER HE READ OUR BOOK... A
SKINNY ABNORMAL AMERICAN BOY!
YOU TOO CAN BE LIKE MELVIN
GOODMAN!

SEE MAD! BUY MAD! BE MAD! TODAY!

WOOD.

March of June, May-June 1956—Vol. 1, No. 10. Published 10 months by Fawcett Publications Co., Inc., at 220 Eastgate St., New York 17, N. Y. William M. Fawcett, President; Robert A. Fawcett, Editor. Known as former chief editor of the Post Office of New York, N. Y., this man's responsibility to the U. S. was the magazine—April 1956—circulation \$1.00. Reader protests copyrighted, used by Fawcett Publications Co., Inc. Printed in the U. S. A. Unpublished manuscripts sent out for editorial consideration by signed return envelope. No similarity between any of the characters, names or places appearing in this magazine with any of those things or items in literature, and any such similarity is purely coincidental.
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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! WELL, MOP INTO THE HAUNT, HUNGRY HOBNOBS. THIS IS THE OLD WITCH WHO SHIVER-CHOKES STEWING ANOTHER SCREAM-SMACK IN HER GRUDGY CAULDRON. I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T EATEN ALREADY, BECAUSE IF YOU HAVE... WELL, COME CLOSER TO THE CAULDRON JUST IN CASE. I'D HATE TO HAVE THE FLOOR WISHED UP WHILE I'M NARRATING MY HAUNTS-AND-SCARES NOVELETTE. BEHOLD... THE OLD RECIPE NEEDS A LITTLE FLAVORING! AND NOW, READ EMILY'S STORY IN HIS OWN WORDS. HE CALLS IT...

SUCKER BAIT!

I WALK SLOWLY THROUGH THE DESERTED NIGHT STREETS AND I LISTEN TO THE TERRIFIED SILENCE OF MY TOWN. I LISTEN TO THE STILLNESS OF ITS LOCKED DOORS AND SHUTTERED WINDOWS, AND I CAN ALMOST HEAR THE FRIGHTENED BREATHING OF THE PEOPLE HIDING BEHIND THEM. I LISTEN TO THE QUICK HEAVY FOOTSTEPS FOLLOWING ME, GRATING BEHIND. MY HANDS ARE COOL AND MY BLOOD FLOWING THROUGH MY SHIVERING BODY, BUT I AM NOT AFRAID. EVEN THOUGH I KNOW I AM GOING TO DIE, I AM NOT AFRAID. FOR I AM TO BE THE VAMPIRE'S LAST VICTIM...



NO MORE WILL THE GOOD PEOPLE OF MY TOWN WHISPER IN THE SHY OF FEAR. NO MORE WILL EACH DAWN FEEL INTO THE DARK STILL MORNING AND SEE ANOTHER BLOODLESS CORPSE. FOR THEY WILL FIND HIM NOW. THEY WILL FIND MY BODY AND THEN THEY WILL FIND THE VAMPIRE AND DRIVE A STAKE THROUGH HIS CURSED INHUMAN HEART. THE FOOTSTEPS BEHIND ME ARE CLOSER NOW...

I THINK OF STANLEY, MY OLDER BROTHER, SILENTLY WORKING AT HIS HIS LATHE OR HIS DRILL PRESS OR WHATEVER HE DOES AT HIS JOB ON THE NIGHT SHIFT AT THE FACTORY, AND I THINK OF THE SACRIFICE THAT WILL BE IN HIS FACE AND THE SILENT BLACK BAND ENVELOPING HIS STRONG ARM...



AND THEN I THINK OF MY FATHER... WHITE AND RED, NEVER MORE TO SMILE OR LAUGH OR SING SONGS... MY FATHER... LYING DEAD IN THE TOWN'S ONLY FUNERAL PARLOR WITH NO BLOOD TO DRAIN FROM HIS PUNCTURED BODY...

SUDDENLY THE WHITE BRIGHTLY IN MY FATHER'S FACE IS GONE, AND THE SADNESS IN MY BROTHER'S FACE HAS DISAPPEARED AND THEY ARE BOTH SMILING AND LAUGHING AND WAVING AT ME AS I STEP OFF THE TRAIN...

YES... THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST, MY FATHER WAS ALIVE AND THERE WAS NO SILENT BLACK BAND ON MY BROTHER'S ARM. THEY HAD COME DOWN TO THE STATION TO MEET ME. I HAD COME HOME... HOME, AFTER FOUR YEARS OF COLLEGE...



JUST THINK, STANLEY! MY BOY, YOUR BROTHER EMILE... A COLLEGE GRADUATE... A CHEMIST...

LOWE IT ALL TO YOU, BOTH OF YOU. YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE. YOU PAID MY WAY. I CAN NEVER FULLY REPAY YOU BUT I'LL TRY. HONESTLY I'LL TRY!

WELL, CUT IT, EMILE. LET ME CARRY YOUR BAGS. HERE...

CAREFUL, STAN. I HAVE SOME EQUIPMENT IN THEM...

COME, EMILE. COME. LET'S GO HOME...



THAT WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST. I REMEMBER IT ALL SO CLEARLY. WE WALKED HOME, ARM IN ARM, THROUGH THE DESERTED STREETS...

WHERE... WHERE IS EVERYBODY? START WHERE'S ALL THE JOBS?

LOOKED UP... BEHIND THEIR DOORS...

HE DOESN'T KNOW, POP! HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT THE VAMPIRE!

THE VAMPIRE? WHAT VAMPIRE? FIRST WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

THE TOWN IS BEING TERRORIZED BY A VAMPIRE, EMILE! TWELVE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MURDERED ALREADY... THEIR BLOOD SUCKED FROM THEIR BODIES. TWELVE PEOPLE IN TWELVE DAYS...

IS... IS THIS TRUE, POP?

YES, EMILE. IT... IT'S TRUE. BUT MAYBE, NOW THAT YOU'RE HOME...

HA, POP! WHAT COULD EMILE DO? IT DOESN'T TAKE A COLLEGE EDUCATION TO CATCH A VAMPIRE!

THE HOUSE WAS OLDER, AND MAYBE IN NEED OF PAINTING, BUT IT WAS STILL THE SAME. IT WAS STILL HOME. POP OPENED THE DOOR AND I STEPPED INSIDE. SPIRAL STREAMERS OF CREPE PAPER DECORATED THE LIVING ROOM IN MY HONOR...

WELCOME HOME, EMILE!

LET'S HAVE A DRINK!

WELL, STAN. LOOK... I APPRECIATE ALL THIS! REALLY! BUT I'M INTERESTED IN THE VAMPIRE! WHAT ABOUT IT...

IT'S HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE! EMILE, IF YOU ONLY KNOW HOW...

POP! WE AGREED TO FORGET ABOUT THE VAMPIRE. TONIGHT! WE AGREED THAT WE'D MAKE EMILE'S HOME-COMING A HAPPY ONE...

HOW CAN I BE HAPPY, STAN, WHEN TWELVE OF MY TOWNSMEN ARE DEAD?

ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT. IT ALL STARTED WHEN OLD MAN FEENEY WAS FOUND DEAD... TWO TINY HOLES IN HIS RECK, AND HIS BLOOD DRAINED FROM HIS BODY. THEN, ED CORB WAS NEXT... AND SO ON. THE WHOLE TOWN'S SCARED STIFF. NO ONE GOES OUT AT NIGHT EXCEPT ME AND THE OTHER BOYS ON THE NIGHT SHIFT AT THE PLANT.

HASN'T ANYONE FOUND THE VAMPIRE? FIRST DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FRAP IT... DRIVE A STAKE THROUGH ITS HEART?

NO ONE'S SEEN IT. NO ONE KNOWS WHERE IT SLEEPS. BELIEVE ME, WE'VE TRIED TO FIND ITS RESTING PLACE BUT IT'S BEEN NO USE. ME AND THE BOYS EVEN TOOK A NIGHT OFF FROM THE PLANT AND WANDERED AROUND TOWN TRY TO CATCH SIGHT OF IT.

IT'S ALMOST TEN-THIRTY, STANLEY. HADN'T YOU BETTER BE RUNNING ALONG?



STANLEY GLANCED AT HIS WATCH.

SORRY, EMILE. TIME TO GO TO WORK. I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING...

I DON'T KNOW, STAN. I'M PRETTY TIRED. I'LL PROBABLY STILL BE ASLEEP WHEN YOU GET HOME...

HE SMILED...

OHAY, KID. WHEN I GET UP, THEN, STAN. NOW. IT... IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU HOME AGAIN, EMILE.

IT'S GOOD TO BE HOME, STAN.

HE WAS GONE, STAN. MY BROTHER. FOR THREE YEARS HE'D DONE THIS FOR ME. WORKED TO HELP PUT ME THROUGH COLLEGE. ONE TURNED TO ME.

YOU MUST BE TIRED, STAN. AFTER THAT LONG TRIP, EMILE? COME. YOUR ROOM IS READY.

THANKS, POP! I'M REST...

POP WATCHED ME UNDOSS AND CRAWL INTO MY OLD BED. THEN HE SHAPPED OFF THE LIGHT. I THINK I WAS ASLEEP AS SOON AS MY HEAD HIT THE PILLOW. THE NEXT THING I REMEMBER WAS POP'S GOD-AWFUL SCREAMING WAKING ME UP...

WHAT? WHAT THE... POP? POP?

I RUSHED TO POP'S ROOM. THE DOOR WAS LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE. BY THE TIME I'D BROKEN IT OPEN, HIS SCREAMS HAD STOPPED. I SNAPPED ON THE LIGHT. POP LAY ON HIS BED, LATHLY WHITE. THERE WERE TWO SMALL PUNCTURE HOLES IN HIS NECK.

POP? MY GOD! POP!

HE WAS DEAD. I DON'T REMEMBER TOO CLEARLY WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT. BETWEEN FITS OF CRYING, I THINK I MADE A PHONE CALL. ANYWAY, THE NEXT THING I KNEW, STAN WAS HOME AND HE WAS COMFORTING ME AND I WAS SHRIEKING HYSTERICALLY...

I'LL GET IT, STAN! I SWEAR I'LL GET THAT HAMSTER!

TAKE IT EASY, EMILE. WE ALL WANT TO FIND IT. THE WHOLE TOWN WANTS TO. WE'LL GET IT FOR POP! YOU AND ME.

THE HOUSE WAS FULL OF PEOPLE...NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS. I GUESS AFTER A WHILE I CALMED DOWN. STAN MADE A PHONE CALL, AND MR. GOODIN, THE TOWN UNDERTAKER, CAME AND TOOK POP AWAY. IT WAS ABOUT FIVE IN THE MORNING WHEN EVERYBODY LEFT...

YOU... YOU MUST BE TIRED, STAN? WHY DON'T YOU GET SOME REST?

I WILL, EMILE. SOON. FEELING BETTER?

I NEEDED. MY EYES FELL ON MY STILL-UNPACKED SUITCASE. SUDDENLY I KNEW. I KNEW HOW TO TRAP OUR VAMPIRE. I UNPACKED THE SUITCASE WITH MY EQUIPMENT, THE EQUIPMENT I'D BOUGHT IN COLLEGE...

STAN, LOOK. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?

UH-UH? NO! WHAT IS IT?

IT'S A **SEISER COUNTER** STAN. IT **DETECTS RADIO ACTIVE MATERIAL**. IT **CLICKS** WHEN IT **HEARS** ANY. THIS IS THE WAY YOU TURN IT ON. SEE? NOW... LISTEN...

I **CLAPPED** ON THE **SEISER COUNTER**. IT **BEGAN TO CLICK LOUDLY...**

WHY...IT'S **CLICKING** NOW, EMILE!

YES, STAN! BECAUSE IT'S **DETECTING A RADIO-ACTIVE MATERIAL**. THIS... IN THIS BOTTLE... IS **RADIO PHOSPHOROUS... ISOTOPE P-32**... A **RADIO-ACTIVE TRACER**. THE **SEISER-COUNTER** **SENSES** THE **P-32**. THAT'S WHY IT'S **CLICKING**!

WELL, WHAT'S THIS GOT TO DO WITH THE **VAMPIRE**, EMILE?

I CAN'T TELL YOU, STAN. JUST **TRUST** ME, AND **DON'T WORRY**. AFTER **TONIGHT**, THIS TOWN WILL BE **RID** OF HIM. YOU'LL SEE. NOW, WHY **DON'T** YOU GET SOME **SLEEP**? YOU MUST BE **TIRED**.

I AM **TIRED**, EMILE. I THINK I **WILL** HIT THE **WALL**...

STAN WENT INTO HIS ROOM AND SHUT THE DOOR. SOON, IT WAS QUIET AND I KNEW HE WAS ASLEEP. FOR A LONG TIME I SAT THERE, WATCHING IT GET LIGHT AND FEELING THE SUN STREAMING IN THE WINDOW, THEN I TOOK A PENCIL AND BEGAN TO WRITE...

DEAR STANLEY,

WHEN YOU AWAKEN, I WILL BE GONE. DON'T LOOK FOR ME. TOMORROW MORNING, TAKE THE **SEISER-COUNTER** COME THE TOWN, AND LISTEN FOR THE **CLICKS**. WHEN YOU HEAR THEM, YOU WILL HAVE FOUND THE **VAMPIRE'S** **RESTING PLACE**...

MY PLAN WAS SIMPLE. I FINISHED THE NOTE...

... I HAVE SWALLOWED THE **ISOTOPE P-32**. IT WILL BE IN MY **BLOODSTREAM** WHEN THE **VAMPIRE** ATTACKS ME. WHEN HE RETURNS TO HIS **RESTING PLACE**, IT WILL BE IN **HIS BLOODSTREAM**. IT IS THE ONLY WAY. I HAVE SACRIFICED MYSELF FOR **POF**. WHEN YOU DRIVE THE **STAKE**, GIVE ONE **RAP** FOR ME!

EMILE

I PROPPED THE NOTE UP BESIDE THE GIGER-COUNTER AND TOOK THE BOTTLE OF RADIO PHOSPHORUS.



THEN I LEFT THE HOUSE. I WENT OUT INTO THE SUNSHINE. I WENT OUT INTO MY TOWN. I WALKED THE STREETS AND I LOOKED AT THE PEOPLE AND I SAW THE FEAR IN THEIR EYES AND MOURNED MY FATHER AND KNEW THAT WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO WAS RIGHT...



I WATCHED THE SUN SET BEYOND THE DISTANT MOUNTAINS. I WATCHED THE SKY DARKEN AND THE STARS GING OUT... FIRST ONE SOLO, THEN A WHOLE SYMPHONY OF THINKING LIGHT. I LIFTED THE BOTTLE OF PHOS TO MY LIPS...



NOW I LISTEN TO THE DICKHEAVY FOOTSTEPS BEHIND ME, ALMOST ON TOP OF ME. MY HANDS ARE COLD AND MY BLOOD POUNDS THROUGH MY SHIVERING BODY. BUT I AM NOT AFRAID...



I AM NOT AFRAID BECAUSE I KNOW THAT STANLEY HAS AWAKENED AND IS READING MY NOTE...



SMILE! YOU LITTLE FOOL!

AND I KNOW THAT HE WILL SEARCH FOR MY BODY AND FIND IT, AND THE GIGER-COUNTER WILL BE SILENT BECAUSE THE VAMPIRE WILL HAVE DRAINED THE RADIO-ACTIVE TRACER OUT OF MY BODY WITH MY BLOOD...



SMILE... SOB... SMILE

AND THEN STANLEY WILL GO LOOKING. AND HE WILL LISTEN. HE WILL PEER INTO COLLARS AND ATTICS AND OLD BUILDINGS AND CRACKED HOUSES...



I'LL FIND YOU! I'LL FIND YOU!

HE WILL LOOK IN EMPTY LOTS AND OLD WELLS AND CAVES LONG FORGOTTEN...



...AND HE WILL LISTEN. HE WILL LISTEN FOR THE CLICKS. THE CLICKS THAT WILL TELL HIM THAT HE IS NEARING THE VAMPIRE'S RESTING PLACE...



AND THE CLICKS WILL GROW LOUDER AND LOUDER UNTIL STANLEY WILL STAND AND LOOK DOWN AT THE INHUMAN LIVING-DEAD WITH A HATE IN HIS EYES AND A CURSE ON HIS LIPS...



...AND HE WILL LIFT THE ROUGHLY-Hewn WOODEN STAKE AND PLACE IT ON THE VAMPIRE'S CHEST AND RAISE THE BOOK...



...AND DRIVE THE STAKE THROUGH THE BLOOD-SUCKING THING'S INHUMAN HEART...

FOR FOR... URR... AND... JEMIE... URR... AND THE OTHERS...



...UNTIL IT SCRIEKS AND FALLS TO DUST AND IS DESTROYED...

I STOP. I STOP WALKING. THE FOOTSTEPS BEHIND ME STOP TOO. I CLENCH MY FISTS AND GRIT MY TEETH AND WAIT. SUDDENLY, I AM SHIVERING NO LONGER. SUDDENLY MY HANDS ARE WARM. SUDDENLY I AM READY. I TURN, SMILING...



... AND MY SMILE FREEZES AND MY FACE IS A WAX MASK...



STANLEY, MY BROTHER, LEERS
AT ME, HIS FANGS GLEAMING...



STANLEY!
MY GOD!

AND THEN HE IS UPON ME,
THROWING ME TO THE GROUND.
I FEEL THE FLESH OF MY THROAT
TEAR AS HIS NEEDLE-LIKE FANGS
RIP IN...



I FEEL HIS OVERPOWERING STRENGTH
AS HE HOLDS ME FAST. I FEEL A WARM
TRICKLE DOWN BEHIND MY NECK WHERE
THE BLOOD IS RUNNING...



THE STARS ABOVE BEGIN TO SPIN UNTIL THEY WHIRL
IN CONCENTRIC CIRCLES OF LIGHT AND I FEEL MY
STRENGTH EBBING AND KNOW THAT I AM DYING...



JUST BEFORE THE BLACKNESS CLOSES IN, I THINK
OF STANLEY GOING HOME AND TURNING ON THE
ORDER COUNTERS...



AND LISTENING TO THE CLICKS AND TAPPING UP MY NOSE, AND
LAUGHING...



HEE, HEE... WHICH IS JUST WHAT I'M
DOING, EMILE. WELL, AS THEY ALWAYS SAY,
THE BEST Laid Plans of Mice and
CHEMISTS GYRE NO GOOD. SOMEBODY
WAS MADE A JOKE OF UP, BUT SO
STANLEY WAS THE WAMP ALL ALONG. OH,
BROTHER, NO WONDER HE WORKED
NIGHTS AND SLEPT DAYS. ALL VAMPIRES



DO! WHAT? YOU KNOW
SOMEBODY WHO WORKS
NIGHTS AND SLEEPS
DAYS AND HE'S NO
VAMPIRE ARE YOU.
HEE, HEE. JUNEY
TRY LOOKING FOR A
THIN LAYER OF SOIL
IN HIS BED, NOW.
V.B. : THIS WAY.

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! AND NOW... NOW THAT YOUR STOMACHS HAVE BEEN FULLY UPSET BY G.H.'S GROSS-DOCKING, IT'S MY TURN TO **FEED YOU FEAR**. THIS IS YOUR **HOST** IN THE VAULT OF HORROR, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO DIP DOWN INTO MY COLLECTION OF CREEPY CONTRIVANCES AND SPIN ANOTHER SCREAM STORY FOR YOUR PLEASURE. I CALL THIS YELP-YARN...

LOVER, COME HACK TO ME!



THE CAR ENGINE COUGHED AND DIED AND THE NERVOUS STACCATO SOUND OF THE COMPOUR ON THE ROOF SEEMED TO INCREASE IN TEMPO. CHARLES KESLEY LEANED FORWARD, PEEING PAST THE FOGGING WINDSHIELD INTO THE FLUID BLACKNESS ILLUMINATED BY THE HEADLIGHTS. BESIDE HIM, PERCY, HIS BRIDE OF SCARCELY TWO HOURS, SINGLED

THIS ISN'T *FORNAX*, PEE! SHE'S COMED OUT FOR *RODS*! WHAT A WAY TO BEGIN A HONEY-MOON.

OH, DARLING, I'M SO HAPPY, EVEN BEING BORED DOWN ON A LONELY BACKWOODS ROAD IS FUN... AS LONG AS ITS WITH YOU.



CHARLIE TURNED TO HIS LOVELY NEW WIFE. SHE GRINNED AT HIM AND THE LOVE AND HAPPINESS THAT WAS INSIDE HER SPARKLED OUTWARD THROUGH HER SMILING EYES...

YES, BUT... WELL... SPENDING ONE'S WEDDING NIGHT STUCK IN A CAR ISN'T MY IDEA OF FUN, PEG.

CHARLIE, DEAR. TWO HOURS AGO I WAS PEGGY ANDERSON... LIVING WITH AN OLD MARRIED AUNT... AN ORPHAN WHO GREW UP KNOWING NO LOVE.



ALAN ANDERSON, MY FATHER, WAS KILLED BEFORE I WAS BORN. AUNTIE NEVER TOLD ME WHY OR HOW, ALTHOUGH I QUESTIONED HER SO MANY TIMES ABOUT IT. SOMETIMES I THINK SHE WAS TRYING TO HIDE SOMETHING ABOUT MY FATHER'S DEATH... SOME TERRIBLE MYSTERY!



AND MY MOTHER, FRED, DIED GIVING BIRTH TO ME. YOU MET AUNTIE. YOU KNOW WHAT A FRISKY OLD WOMAN SHE IS. SHE BROUGHT ME ON, CHARLIE. SHE NEVER SAVED ME ANY AFFECTION BECAUSE I DOUBT IF THERE WAS AN OUNCE OF AFFECTION IN HER TO GIVE. THEN, DEAREST, YOU CAME ALONG... AND I KNEW WHAT IT WAS TO LOVE SOMEONE, AND WANT SOMEONE, AND FOR SOMEONE TO LOVE AND WANT ME.



PEGGY SHUGGLED UP CLOSE TO HER NEW HUSBAND...

...SO YOU SEE, DARLING, WHETHER IT'S A PALACE OR A BOGGER-DOWN CAR ON A DESERTED MOODY ROAD, AS LONG AS I CAN BE CLOSE TO YOU... AND KNOW LOVE...



THERE WAS A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, AND A THUNDER CLAP ROARED. CHARLES REACHED OVER AND SHAPPED OFF THE HEADLIGHTS, AND THE DARKNESS CLOSED IN AROUND THEM. HE COULD HEAR PEGGY'S HEAVY BREATHING ABOVE THE DOWNPOUR AS HE SLID HIS ARMS AROUND HER AND DREW HER TO HIM...



PEGGY POINTED OFF TO THE LEFT... INTO THE DOWN-POURING BLAZENESS...

WAIT UNTIL ANOTHER LIGHTNING FLASH SILHOUETTES IT, THEN? IT'S A HOUSE? AN OLD MANSION?



PEGGY FLUNG OPEN THE CAR DOOR. THE RAIN LASHED IN AT THEM...

COME ON, DARLING. EVEN IF IT'S DESERTED I'LL BE LESS GRAMMED THAN THE CAR. LET'S FUN FOR IT. OKAY? I'LL SET THE OVERNIGHT BAR...



THEY RAN... HAND IN HAND... THROUGH THE GOLD WHITE LIGHTNING FLASHES AND THE EAR-SPLITTING THUNDER ROLLS... THROUGH THE CASCAIDING SHEETS OF RAIN AND SPLASHING MUD... UNTIL THEY CLIMBED FARTING AND BREATHLESS, ONTO THE PORCH OF THE OLD HOUSE...



WHEN... I'M SOAKED TO THE SKIN...

ME TOO, LOOKS LIKE THIS PLACE IS DESERTED. THE WINDOWS ARE ALL BOARDED UP AND... THE DOOR'S LOCKED...

BEHIND THEM, THE RAIN SWIFT OFF THE PORCH ROOF AND WATERFALLED TO THE GROUND, FEEDING GROWING MYRIADS THAT RAN CASIBLY OFF INTO THE BLACKNESS DOWN THE HILL. CHARLIE SHOOKED...



WELL... IT'S EITHER BACK TO THE CAR FOR US OR BREAK IN...

I'M SURE WHOEVER OWNS THE HOUSE WOULDN'T MIND UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES...

THE ASED LOCK, HOTTED WITH THE YEARS, SPLINTERED OPEN UNDER CHARLIE'S WEIGHT, AND THE DOOR SWUNG WIDE...



WELL, MRS. KEELEY? WELCOME TO OUR ROSEWOOD COTTAGE...

OH, CHARLIE...

PEGGY LAUGHED NAFFLY AS CHARLIE LIFTED HER IN HIS STRONG ARMS AND CARRIED HER ACROSS THE THRESHOLD...



IT'S THE CUSTOM, YOU KNOW, PEGGY...

DARLING...

CHARLES KICKED THE DOOR SHUT BEHIND HIM, SLAMMING OUT THE NOISE OF THE STORM. IN THE GLOOM, WHITE BULBS SAT SILENTLY COVERED WITH THE DUST OF YEARS OF NEAR-OBSCURITY...



WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW? FURNITURE LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE MOVED OUT AND LEFT EVERYTHING EXACTLY AS IS...

THEN... THEN THERE MUST BE A BED-ROOM... AND A BED...

CHARLES FOUND CANDLES IN A HOLDER UNDER ONE OF THE DUST COVERINGS AND LIT THEM, AND THEY BEGAN TO EXPLORE THE DESERTED OLD MANSION. A MASSIVE WINDING STAIRCASE LED FROM THE MAIN FLOOR UPWARD. UPSTAIRS, THEY FOUND...



A BED-ROOM... WITH A FIREPLACE... AND LOOS... SAY! LOOK AT THAT BATTLE-AXE OVER THE MANTLE!

START A FIRE, DEAR, WHILE I UNCOVER THIS BED...

SOON, A ROARING FIRE WAS FILLING THE DUSTY OLD BEDROOM WITH ITS WARMTH. BEFORE IT, A MAKE-SHIFT CLOTHESLINE HELD DRIPPING CLOTHES. THE RARE BED HAD BEEN CLEARED OF ITS DUST-COVER AND LAY WITH ITS BLANKET THROWN BACK INVITINGLY. THE OVER-NIGHT BAG SAT OPEN UPON A CHAIR. CHARLES AND PEGGY STOOD, WATCHING THE FLAMES...



READY TO HIT THE BAY, NOW?

MMMM...

OUTSIDE, THE STORM LASHED AT THE OLD HOUSE. BUT WITHIN, THE HOWLS WERE OBVIOUS TO ITS FURY, HEARING ONLY THE POUNDING OF THEIR OWN HEARTS AS THEY WALKED TOGETHER TO THE HUGE BED...



THE FIRE CRACKLED AND LEAPED, LICKING AT THE LOGS. THE STORM SEEMED TO INCREASE IN INTENSITY, RAGING AND WHIPPING THE ANCIENT EDIFICE. BETWEEN TELLOWED AND MUSTY SHEETS, CHARLES AND PEGGY WERE CLOSER, FEELING THE INCREASING INTENSITY OF THEIR OWN EMOTIONAL STORM...



AND THEN, THE STORMS FADED, SPENDING THEMSELVES. THE FIRE COOLED, SLEEP AND PEACE DESCENDED...



A SUDDEN SOUND AWAKENED CHARLES, AND HE SAT UP ABRUPTLY, STARRING INTO THE DARKNESS. THE FIRE HAD GONE OUT. THE BED BESIDE HIM WAS EMPTY, AND THE SHEETS...

"GOOD LORD! THESE SHEETS ARE WHITE, AND... AND EVERYTHING LOOKS SO NEW!"



THE ROOM WAS NO LONGER DIRTY AND MUSTY AND SMELLING OF AGE. EVERYTHING WAS SPOTLESS AND CLEAN AND HAD THE GLOSS OF NEWNESS. THE WINDOWS THAT HAD BEEN SCARDED UP NOW ADMITTED THE LIGHT FROM A COLD MOON SHINING OUTSIDE...

"WHAT IS THIS? PEGGY! PEGGY! WHERE ARE YOU?"



THEIR WAREHOUSE CLOTHESLINE WAS GONE. THEIR OVERNIGHT BAG WAS MISSING. OUTSIDE, AN ENGINE SPUTTERED TO A STOP. CHARLES WENT TO A WINDOW AND PEERED OUT. LAUGHTER DRIFTED UP TO HIM. A MAN AND WOMAN WERE GETTING OUT OF AN OLD-STYLE LIMOUSINE...

"WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT? AN OLD LA SALLE! AND IT LOOKS BRAND NEW..."



CHARLES WATCHED AS THE COUPLE CROSSED THE NEWLY PAVED BLUE-STONE DRIVE THAT HAD BEEN JUST A MASS OF WEEDS AND MUD ONLY A SHORT TIME BEFORE. HE LISTENED AS THEY MOUNTED THE NEWLY PAINTED PORCH...

"WELL, MRS. ANDERSON? WELCOME TO OUR HONEYMOON COTTAGE."

"OH, ALAN..."



ANDERSON? ALAN ANDERSON, WHO DID THAT NAME SOUND FAMILIAR? DOWNSTAIRS A KEY RATTLED IN THE LOCK AND A DOOR SWUNG OPEN. CHARLES CROSSED THE BEDROOM AND WENT TO THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS...

IT'S THE CUSTOM, YOU KNOW, FREDA. DARLING, THIS IS YOUR NEW HOME, LIKE IT?



CHARLES GASPED, FREDA? WHY, THAT WAS PERRY DOWN THERE BEING CARRIED ACROSS THE THRESHOLD? OR WAS IT PERRY? IT...IT LOOKED LIKE PERRY!

WELL, DARLING! THIS IS YOUR NEW HOME, LIKE IT? FREDA AND ALAN ANDERSON? OF COURSE!



DOWN BELOW, AS UPSTAIRS, EVERYTHING WAS SHINY AND NEW, THE OUST-COVERS THAT HAD HOOKED THE FURNITURE WERE GONE...

OH, ALAN, IT'S BEAUTIFUL! FREDA AND ALAN ANDERSON WERE PERRY'S PARENTS!



CHARLES DUCKED INTO THE BEDROOM AS THEY CAME UP THE STAIRS. HE HELD HIS BREATH, COVERING SOUND THE DOOR AS THEY ENTERED...

THEIR CLOTHES...THEY'RE THE STYLES OF THE TWENTIES! AND THE OLD-FASHIONED CAR...THE NEW FURNITURE! WHY, I'M WITNESSING WHAT HAPPENED TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN THIS VERY HOUSE...



CHARLES WATCHED, FASCINATED, AS THE MAN LIT A FIRE IN THE NEW FIREPLACE AND THE WOMAN BEGAN TO UNDRESS. HE DARED NOT MOVE FROM HIS HIDING PLACE BEHIND THE BEDROOM DOOR FOR FEAR OF BEING SEEN...

I'M WITNESSING PERRY'S MOTHER AND FATHER'S WEDDING NIGHT... OH, ALAN, I'M SO DELIRIOUSLY HAPPY!



THE COUPLE MOVED, ARM AND ARM, TO THE BED THAT CHARLES HAD ENTERED IN. HE TURNED AWAY LISTENING TO THEIR HEAVY BREATHING, THEIR SOFT VOICES WHISPERING...



EMBARRASSED BY THE INTIMACY OF THE SCENE BEYOND, CHARLES WHIRED, STARING AT THE BLANK DOOR, UNTIL THEIR SOFT WHISPERS FADED AND THEIR GASPS AND SIGHS TURNED TO THE REGULAR BREATHING OF SLEEPER...



CHARLES WAS ABOUT TO STEP FROM HIS HIDING PLACE AND TIP-TOE DOWNSTAIRS WHEN ELIZABETH POSTSTERS APPROACHED...

OH, OH! IT'S FREDA... PERRY'S MOTHER... SHE'S COMING THIS WAY!



FREDA'S FACE WAS A BRIMMING MASK WITH BLAZED STARRING EYES AS SHE SEEMED TO FLOAT ACROSS THE HED-ROOM TOWARD THE FIREPLACE...

SHE'S REACHING FOR THAT BATTLE-AXE OVER THE MANTEL...



GRIPPING THE LETHAL-LOOKING WEAPON IS HER TINY WHITE-KNUCKLED FISTS, FREDA RETURNED TO THE BED WHERE ALAN LAY SLEEPING PEACEFULLY, SHE STOOD OVER HIM, HER EYES FILLING WITH TEARS...

OH, ALAN! ALAN! THIS NIGHT IS SO BEAUTIFUL, THIS LOVE OF OURS SO COMPLETE...



CHARLES LISTENED, NOOTED TO HIS HIDING PLACE, AS FREDA'S SOFT QUIVERING VOICE DRIFTED ACROSS THE ROOM...

THIS IS THE WAY LOVE SHOULD ALWAYS REMAIN, MY DARLING. SWEET AND CLEAN AND PASSIONATE, BUT IT DOESN'T, TIME GOES LOVE, ARE DIRTIED IT, THE PASSION GOODE...



HER WORDS WERE ALMOST SURE-SOME NOW, ALMOST RAVING...

BUT THAT ISN'T GOING TO HAPPEN TO OUR SWEET CLEAN PASSIONATE LOVE, MY DEAREST. I'M NOT GOING TO LET IT, I'M GOING TO KEEP IT, EXACTLY AS IT IS... PRESERVE IT, FOR ALWAYS! I'M GOING TO MAKE SOME TIME DOESN'T SPOIL OUR LOVE! ALAN! ALAN, WAKE UP, DARLING!

GOOD LORD! SHE'S... SHE'S...



FOR A MOMENT OF SHEER TERROR CHARLES PROZE, WATCHING HORRIFIED, AS FREDA RAISED THE BATTLE-AXE, THEN HIS VOICE ERUPTED FROM HIS THROAT IN A HIGH-PITCHED SCREAM, AND HE DARTED FORWARD...

MY GOD! SHE'S GOING TO KILL HIM!

WHEE! FREDA! FREDA...



CHARLES LUNGED FORWARD TRYING TO CATCH FREDA'S ARMS, BUT HIS FINGERS CLOSED ON NOTHING-HIS, THE BATTLE-AXE FELL...

STOP! STOP, OH, LORD, I CAN'T STOP HER! I CAN'T FEEL HER, SHE'S LIKE A GHOST!



ALL CHARLES COULD DO WAS TO WATCH HORRIFIED AS PEGGY LIFTED THE HUGE BATTLE-AXE AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL THE FIGURE ON THE BED BECAME A SOFT, WET, RED MASH...



SHE... SHE'S MAD!
**ABSOLUTELY
MAD!**

SATISFIED, PEGGY TIPTOED BACK ACROSS THE ROOM AND REPLACED THE BLOODY BATTLE-AXE OVER THE FIREPLACE...



THIS WAS THE
**SECRET PEGGY'S
AUNT KEPT FROM
HER ALL THESE
YEARS...**

THEN SHE RETURNED TO THE BED AND GRINNED IN BESIDE THE BLOODED REMAINS, SMILING AND WHISPERING SOFTLY...



SHOCK... PEGGY'S MOTHER WAS
**INSANE. SHE KILLED PEGGY'S
FATHER HERE IN THIS HOUSE
ON THEIR WEDDING NIGHT WHEN
PEGGY HERSELF WAS
CONCEIVED...**

CHARLES FELT HIS STOMACH HEAVING AND STUMBLED FROM THE GORY SCENE IN THE BEDROOM. EVERYTHING BEGAN TO SPIN. HE FELT THE FLOOR SINKING BENEATH HIM. SUDDENLY HE WAS LYING IN BED, STARRING AT A DUSTY OLD FIRE PLACE IN A DUSTY OLD BEDROOM WITH SHARDED UP WINDOWS...



WHY... WHY... I'VE BEEN
DREAMING!

IT WAS ONLY A DREAM. EVERYTHING EXACTLY AS IT WAS... THE DUST, THE OLD FIREPLACE, THE BATTLE-AXE... **SASP...** THE BATTLE-AXE OVER THE FIREPLACE! IT'S COME!



... EXACTLY AS
IT IS. PREPARE
**SERVE IT... FOR
ALWAYS! I'M
GOING TO MAKE
SURE TIME
DON'T SPOIL
OUR LOVE! CHARLES!**

PEGGY'S VOICE CAME FROM BEHIND HIM... ALMOST SING-SONG... ALMOST RAVING. CHARLES'S BLOOD FREEZE. THOSE WORDS... THOSE VERY WORDS. HE DIDN'T EVER HAVE TO TURN AROUND TO KNOW THAT PEGGY WAS THERE STANDING OVER HIM, RAISING THE BATTLE-AXE IN HER TINY WHITE-ENVELOPED FISTS.



CHARLES... WAKE UP,
DARLING!

PEGGY! PEGGY!

AND AS HE FELT THE COLD STEEL CUTTING INWARD AGAIN AND AGAIN, AND FELT HIS STRENGTH EBBING AWAY, CHARLES SUDDENLY KNEW THAT PEGGY, TOO, HAD CONCEIVED A CHILD THIS NIGHT WHO WOULD MURDER HER HUSBAND ON HER WEDDING NIGHT AS HER INSANE GRANDMOTHER AND INSANE MOTHER HAD DONE.

HER, HEH! TALK ABOUT FAMILY TRADITION, EH, CREEPY? ALL YOU WOULD-RE DREAMS. TAKE A LESSON! CHECK THE BRIDE'S BACKGROUND! IT'S BETTER TO HAVE A BATTLE-AXE FOR ANOTHER IN-LAW THAN TO HAVE ONE FOR AN UNDERTAKER! AND NOW, I'LL



TURN YOU BACK TO THAT CAVE-DROW GROWN, THAT BAW OF A MAD, THE OLD WITON. TAKE IT AWAY, STOP SERVER.

**WE AT E.C. ARE PROUDEST
OF OUR SCIENCE - FICTION
MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...**



**LOOK FOR
THESE SEALS
WHEN YOU BUY!**



**THEY ARE YOUR ASSURANCE OF TOP
ENTERTAINMENT...FOUND ONLY ON
THE FOLLOWING E.C. MAGAZINES:**

**TALES FROM THE CRYPT
HAUNT OF FEAR • VAULT OF HORROR
SHOCK SUSPENSESTORIES
PRIME SUSPENSESTORIES**

**TWO-FISTED TALES • FRONTLINE COMBAT
MAD**

**WEIRD SCIENCE • WEIRD FANTASY
AND THE 250 ANNUAL ANTHOLOGIES:**

**WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY
TWO-FISTED ANNUAL • TALES OF TERROR**

INCENDIARY!



From the doorway in which he crouched, Bronson watched the smoke spiraling toward the sky. His eyes glittered happily with the reflection of the orange and crimson and blue tints lighting up the night: it was the best fire he had ever seen!

His head turned when he heard the piercing siren announcing the arrival of the fire trucks. A smile wrinkled the corners of his mouth as he watched the long coils of hose unwinding; saw the men moving frantically forward in their billowing black-rubber coats. He pursed his lips and, in the safety of the doorway, observed critically the fire-fighting technique on display before him. The men were good, he admitted grudgingly . . . but they'd never get the flames under control before the towering building was gutted. It would take at least an hour before the last embers died amidst the charred ruins . . . an hour and he'd collect the biggest fee of his career!

He opened his silver cigarette case and removed a slim white cylinder of tobacco. For a moment he admired the gold monogram on the paper: only the top-ranking arsonist could afford his own blended cigarettes, like *this*. Meticulously he tapped the cigarette against his manicured thumb nail and earned again to watch the fire he had started.

It was that new fluid that made this job so simple. The old kerosene-rag dodge . . . that was all right for pickers and run-of-the-mill torches. And the guys who used the candle-technique: let them pick up their crummy \$25 for a hot-so-mus job. When you get into

the big-time like Bronson . . . when arson was made to pay off so well you needed a firm of accountants to handle your income tax returns . . . you did the job right, and you did it yourself!

The new fluid, Bronson thought to himself, would set him a *wildfire*! The painstaking experiments with gasoline, kerosene, sulfur and remote-controlled time-fuses was going to *really* pay off! The incendiary he had so cunningly contrived could make an almost instantaneous pyre of concrete!

He chuckled to himself, drawing a gold lighter from his pocket and fondling it as he watched the firemen scurrying around the base of the burning building. The ingenious way he had planted his new incendiary fluid, so that pressing a button 50 yards away generated intense heat and forced vapors to rise and fire the upper stories . . . made the job a high-speed operation and guaranteed there'd be no evidence of arson for snoopers to uncover.

Bronson placed the monogrammed cigarette in his mouth, raised the lighter and pressed the flywheel button. A yellow flame leaped out toward the cigarette, turned the tobacco orange-white . . . and, in the same instant, enveloped Bronson in a cocoon of fire.

A squeal of agony burst from his seared lips as he realized what had happened: those fumes generated by his incendiary liquid had clung to him! The first contact with flame had set him alight as if he was made of dry tinder!

He staggered out of the doorway, dimly aware of the stench of burning flesh . . . he felt the skin sloughing off his hands like dying ashes fallen from a burnt log. A second scream of agony welled up as his scorched lips as he stumbled and fell in a charred heap. The eerie echo still reverberated through the alley as the last tongues of flame flickered over his unrecognizable body.



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THE OLD WITCH'S NICHE

Dear Old Witch,

The entire student body of Boys High School was very surprised when the monthly school newspaper, "The Red and Black," came out with a story on your fine column. I myself placed a copy. The principal of our school must like your column, or else he probably would not have allowed the story to be printed!

Boy Moore
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Yes, how! That'll be the day! The old boy was probably out sick that week. Leave us alone!!!

We wish to express our gratitude for your wonderful stories. We have read one of your stories before each game, and have won 100% of a row without a loss. We owe our great success to your thrilling stories. We will continue to read your book and continue to win.

The Basketball Team
Columbus High School
Columbus, Ohio

Took you a long time to mail the letter, old' wail, after reading my mag all the time, you guys should be pretty good on P.O.U. shots!

Comparing E.C. Comics to their inferior imitations is like comparing Marilyn Monroe to you, two old boys!

E. Doley
Paradigade 1.1

I LIKE THAT! (So do WE—editor!)

I have only one justifiable complaint about your exceptionally interesting horror tales. I most ferreently desire to voice my violent objection to the omission of dead tissue.

William Ferguson
San Francisco, Calif.

What is the Wraith is he talking about? (He's talking about "walking corpses," gram-m—ed.) He's talking about WALKING CORPSES, you di-concerned run, pore? (Yeah, he's talking about walking corpses, like for a change you don't put in this issue, phle-gum—ed.) Oh, you mean corpse whose DEAD TISSUE has been ASSIMILATED, wam-heads? (Now you got it, head-brain—ed.) This boy is a ☐

I was glad to see that Craig, Davis, and your boy, Ghastly Graham largely brought the above pictures of you GhoulMaster up to date!

David McGill
Shute, Lo

The comic business is a rough market, David. We done aged in the last three years!

As any E.C. fan knows, your stories are the best in the business. But what gets my goat is this: Why must you have such ridiculous, stupid titles for them? Titles like: A CREEP IN THE CREEP, ONE WILL THAT

END WELL, LOWER NORTH, etc. You should have and use titles for mature stories!

Bill Spencer
Los Angeles, Calif.

Humor is the Spice of life, Ed. And a pun is the lowest form of humor. And since my stories are about the lowest forms of life... no dice, Mr. Spencer!

You slipped up in your Feb. issue of House of Fear (No. 17) when you told the story, "Goddie My Dreams." I actually got a lump in my throat and shed a tear for that poor guy in the cop's body. Don't tell me there's a heart left in that gruesome old body of yours after all?

C. E. Crandell
Overland, Mo.

To tell you the truth, C.E., I was out sick that week!

I just got back from the local magazine with the latest copy of your shiny mag (H.F. No. 17). I was eating lunch when I read C.E.'s totally lit of horror called, "Garden Party." I guess spaghetti and E.C. don't mix. I made a dish for the sequel, ank.

John McHane
West Palm Beach, Fla.

I was so concerned, I ran for the sink, but I saved it! Anytime I get sick from your mag's it's strictly a pleasure. Nothing's yours.

Frank Kresger
Houston, Texas

Look! Whydya avoid trouble? How many times I gotta tell ya that Don't read an E.C. mag—mag's while sittin' in water! In fact, don't be hot—hot... don't read no E.C. mag—mag's one hour before 'n one hour after sittin' in water! Read E.C. mag—mag's (and proper manner) at the right time (and right place)... which is, like my stupa knows, sittin' on a fresh green (and old comestory) when the moon is full, at midnight, inevitably!

All my friends and neighbors, as well as my mother and dad, think that your magazine is absolutely disgusting. As for ME, all I can say is, keep up the good work. I like it. I like it!

Joseph Amoretti, Jr.
Cleveland, N. Y.

So do I. So do U. So do we WE. So do WE—and I Drop dead drop dead! And stay into my column my column! (O.K. O.K., how how head head—ed, ed.)

So subscriptions are available. 13¢... six issues full year's output... monthly envelopes... inevitably come late... (since the guys that mail 'em are inevitably out sick). For TALK OF TERROR annual also available. Mail Address for mail, subscription orders, T or F orders, money with no orders, money, and unneeded dead tissue is at

The Old Witch
Room 780, Dept. 1119
225 Lafayette St.
N. Y. C.-12, N. Y.

THE OLD WITCH'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

HEE, HEE! HERE'S ANOTHER OF MY INFANTILE INSANITIES... ANOTHER CHILDISH CHILLER... ANOTHER NURSERY NAUSEATOR... I CALL THIS FOUL FABLE...

DOUBLE-HEADER!



ONCE UPON A TIME... LONG, LONG AGO... THERE LIVED AN OLD KING WHO... EVEN THOUGH HE WAS SURROUNDED BY ALL THE LOVELY LADIES OF THE COURT ALL DAY LONG... WAS VERY LONELY. THE KING WAS LONELY BECAUSE... EVEN THOUGH ALL OF THE PALACE LADIES YEARNED TO BE HIS QUEEN... HE HAD NEVER MARRIED. THE KING HAD NEVER MARRIED BECAUSE HE'D NEVER FALLEN IN LOVE...

EVERY DAY THE LADIES OF THE COURT WOULD SMILE AND WINK AND TRY TO PLEASE THE LONELY OLD KING, BUT THE LONELY OLD KING WAS A RIGHTED-AS OLD GUS, AND HE WOULDN'T BAIL FOR THEIR FLIRTATIONS...

GOOD MORNING, YOUR MAJESTY!
GOOD MORNING, SIRE!
GOOD MORNING, YOUR MAJESTY!
HMMMM...



DO YOU THINK THIS GOWN IS TOO GARISH, SIRE?
DO YOU LIKE THE WAY I'VE DONE MY HAIR, SIRE?
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU TODAY, SIRE?



THEN, SHE SAW, WHILE THE COURT LADIES WERE EACH TRYING VERY HARD TO GAIN THE LOVELY OLD KING'S ATTENTION, HE SUDDENLY SAT BOLT UPRIGHT IN HIS THRONE.



GOLFF!

WHAT IS IT, YOUR HIGHNESS?

YOUR EYES ARE POPPING OUT OF YOUR HEAD, YOUR HIGHNESS!

THE OLD KING GASPED...



THAT GIRL WHO... WHO IS SHE?

WHAT GIRL, YOUR MAJESTY?

WHERE, YOUR MAJESTY?

OH...

THERE, AT THE FAR END OF THE COURT, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL THE OLD KING HAD EVER SEEN WAS SILENTLY KICKING THE FLOOR...



JANE, YOUR MAJESTY!!

THAT... THAT SCULLERY MAID, SIRE?

YES! YES! HER! BRING HER HERE... TO ME!

THE SMILING GIRL WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE LOVE-STUCK KING. YES, KIDDIES, **LOVESTUCK!** THE OLD BOY HAD FINALLY FALLEN IN LOVE. HE LOOKED HER OVER HUMBLED... THEN...



LEAVE US ALONE!

YES, YOUR MAJESTY!

YES, YOUR MAJESTY!

THE LADIES OF THE COURT FLEW OFF, LEAVING THE OLD KING ALONE WITH THE SCULLERY MAID...



DID YOU SEE THE WAY HE LOOKED AT HER?

WHAT IF HE ASKED HER TO BE HIS QUEEN?

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, HANGING AROUND HERE, TRYING TO RIDGE THE OLD CROWN...

MEANWHILE, INSIDE THE THRONE ROOM...



THE MINUTE I Laid EYES ON YOU, MY DEAR, I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU...

YOU HONOR ME, YOUR MAJESTY!

AND WHEN THE LADIES OF THE COURT WERE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THE THRONE ROOM, THE KING ANNOUNCED...



MY SUBJECTS, THIS LOVELY CREATURE HAS CONSENTED TO BE MY WIFE. LET ME PRESENT **SILPA**, YOUR **QUEEN-TO-BE**...

AND SO, SYLVIA AND THE OLD KING WERE MARRIED. AND IF SHE'D BEEN BEAUTIFUL IN HER SOULLETRY RAGS, SHE WAS EVEN MORE SO IN HER NEW ROYAL DRESS. THE LADIES OF THE COURT WERE EXTREMELY JEALOUS OF HER...



LOOK AT HIM. THE OLD FOOL. SHE'S HALF HIS AGE.

DON'T WORRY. HE'LL SOON TIRE OF HER.

AND ONE OF US WILL YET BE QUEEN.

BUT THE COURT LADIES WERE WRONG. THE OLD KING DID NOT SOON TIRE OF HIS NEW YOUNG QUEEN. IN FACT, AS EACH DAY PASSED, HE FELL MORE AND MORE IN LOVE WITH HER...



OH, MY DEAR. I WISH THAT I WERE YOUNGER AGAIN SO THAT I COULD MAKE YOU LOVE ME AS I LOVE YOU.

IT'S ALL RIGHT, IRVING. I AM CONTENT JUST BEING YOUR QUEEN.

AND QUEEN SYLVIA WAS CONTENT JUST BEING THE QUEEN, EVEN THOUGH KING IRVING COULD NOT PHYSICALLY SHOW HIS LOVE FOR HER. INSTEAD, AT NIGHT, QUEEN SYLVIA WOULD GO WALKING...



WHO... WHO'S HERE? WHO'S OUT HERE IN THE GARDEN?

IT IS I, QUEEN SYLVIA! CEDRIC! CEDRIC, WHOM YOU ONCE LOVED!

HE STOOD BEFORE HER... RESPLENDENT IN HIS UNIFORM. CEDRIC, CAPTAIN OF THE ROYAL GUARDS. CEDRIC, WHOM, WHEN SYLVIA HAD BEEN BUT A SOULETRY MAID, SHE'D LOVED MADLY AND PASSIONATELY...



CEDRIC... PLEASE... GO AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE! DO NOT BE CLOSE TO ME! I AM MARRIED NOW...

WHY DID YOU MARRY HIM, SYLVIA? WHY? WHY?

CEDRIC MOVED FORWARD. SYLVIA BACKED OFF...



BECAUSE HE OFFERED ME HIS KINGDOM... TO BE HIS QUEEN? WHAT GIRL COULD REFUSE?

BUT WHAT ELSE DID HE OFFER THAT COULD HE OFFER THE LOVE A YOUNG WOMAN NEEDS?

CEDRIC CAUGHT HER HAND...

HE... HE LOVED ME VERY MUCH, CEDRIC. HE...

BUT ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH HIS KIND OF LOVE. OR DO YOU NEED... JUST?



...AND HE SWIFT HER INTO HIS STRONG ARMS...



OH, CEDRIC... DARLING...

SYLVIA...

MEANWHILE, FROM HER DARKENED BEDROOM WINDOW, ONE OF THE COURT LADIES WATCHED THE PASSIONATE SCENE IN THE MOONLIGHT...



SAY, BOY! THE QUEEN HAS A LOVER. WAIT UNTIL YVONNE HEARS ABOUT THIS!

THE NEXT NIGHT, WHEN ONCE AGAIN THE QUEEN MET THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS SECRETLY, SOMEONE WAS LISTENING...



THE KING IS ASLEEP, MY SWEET...

SYLVIA... DARLING!

GASP! IT'S TRUE... MARIE WAS RIGHT!

AND SO...

I SAW THEM WITH MY OWN EYES, SUZETTE!

AND I HEARD THEM...

THE KING MUST KNOW THEN WE'LL BE RID OF HER. I'M GOING TO TELL HIM.



SUZETTE REQUESTED AUDIENCE WITH THE KING... PRIVATELY...



ALL RIGHT, MY DEAR. WHAT IS THIS URGENT NEWS YOU HAVE FOR ME?

IT CONCERNS THE QUEEN, SIRE... AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS. IT IS A MATTER OF YOUR HONOR.

THE KING LISTENED TO SUZETTE'S STORY WITH A GREAT SADNESS IN HIS HEART...



MARIE SAW THEM TOGETHER IN THE GARDEN, AND YVONNE HEARD THEM. AND I... I HAD TO TELL FOR...

SYLVIA... MY SYLVIA...

THE KING DISMISSED SUZETTE. HE CLOSED HIS TIRED OLD EYES. THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO DO, IT WAS A MATTER OF HONOR, NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT HURT...



SUMMON THE QUEEN AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS!

YES, YOUR MAJESTY!

MARIE, YVONNE, AND SUZETTE WATCHED AS THE QUEEN AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS WERE BROUGHT TO THE THRONE ROOM...



WHAT DO YOU THINK I DON'T WILL SUFFER YVONNE? KNOW, MARIE!

I'LL TELL YOU! HE'LL HAVE THEM BOTH BEHEADED. WE MUST, HE IS THE KING! THEY HAVE INSULTED HIS HONOR!

INSIDE THE THRONE ROOM, THE KING LOOKED AT THE YOUNG WOMAN WHOM HE LOVED SO DEARLY...

I KNOW IT ISN'T ENTIRELY YOUR FAULT, SYLVIA. I KNOW YOU COULDN'T HELP IT! I FAILED YOU IN A WAR, AND SO YOU WENT ELSEWHERE...

GASP! YOU KNOW?

YES, MY DEAR. AND THAT IS WHAT IS SO PITIFUL. IF I DIDN'T KNOW I WOULDN'T BE FORCED TO DO THAT I NOW MUST DO! I MUST...

SOB... SOB...

... I MUST ORDER YOUR EXECUTION! YOURS... AND HIS. TAKE THEM AWAY!

NO!

NO!

SYLVIA AND GEORGE WERE LEO AWAY. MARIE, TYCHNE, AND SUZETTE WATCHED THEM GO...

ONE OF US WILL GET BE QUEEN, MY CLINGS!

COME! WE MIGHT AS WELL BEGIN WORKING ON THE OLD CROW. LET'S GOIN AND COMFORT HIM!



MEANWHILE THE BROKEN HEARTED KING SAT ON HIS THRONE, THINKING...

I... I LOVE HER. I... I WOULD FORGIVE HER ANYTHING... ONLY... ONLY I CAN'T. I CAN'T BECAUSE...



THEY GLIDED IN... THE THREE LADIES. THEY CROUCHED AROUND THE KING, SOOTHING HIM...

DO NOT BE UNHAPPY, YOUR MAJESTY!

IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.

GIVE ONE OF US A CHANCE TO MAKE YOU HAPPY!



THE KING LOOKED UP AT THEM... AT MARIE AND TYCHNE AND SUZETTE. AND SUDDENLY HIS FACE PALED AND HIS EYES FLASHED...

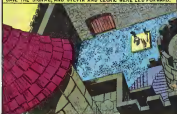
YOUR MAJESTY! GOOD LORD! IRVING!



IN THE COURT YARD, THE AXEMAN WAS BRINDING HIS HUGE AXE, AND THE SOUND DROVE OUT THE MUTED SCREAMS THAT CAME FROM WITHIN THE CASTLE...



ALL OF THE LORDS AND LADIES OF THE COURT HAD GATHERED TO WITNESS THE EXECUTION. ALL BUT THREE. FINALLY THE KING EMERGED AND TOOK HIS PLACE BESIDE THE CHOPPING BLOCK. HE GAVE THE SIGNAL, AND SYLVIA AND CECIL WERE LED FORWARD.



THE AXEMAN'S BLACK ROSE AND FELL, AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD'S HEAD DROPPED INTO THE WAITING BASKET...



THEN THE AXE ROSE ONCE AGAIN, AND WHEN IT CAME DOWN, SYLVIA, THE KING'S ONLY LOVE, LIVED NO MORE...



NOW THE KING WAS A LONELY KING ONCE MORE. AS HE WALKED BACK INTO THE CASTLE, THE COURT LORDS AND LADIES SAW TEARS STREAMING FROM HIS EYES...



INSIDE THE CASTLE, THE THREE LADIES OF THE COURT WHO HAD WISHED VIEWING THE EXECUTION, WRITHED ON THE STONE FLOOR OF THE PYLONE ROOM. MARIE COVERED HER EYES! THEY HAD BEEN PAINFULLY TORN OUT FOR WHAT SHE'D SEEN. FYRONE HAD HER HANDS CLAPPED OVER HER EARS! THE KING HAD BURNED THEM OFF WITH A RED-HOT FORK FOR WHAT SHE'D HEARD. AND SOZETTE CLUTCHED AT HER BLEEDING MOUTH! THE KING HAD GOT OUT HER TONGUE FOR WHAT SHE HAD SPOKEN.



HEE, HEE. BUT NO EVIL, HEAR NO EVIL, SPEAK NO EVIL, SHEDDONY! SO THE OLD REAGE GOES. OLD KING LYING, IN HIS WRATH, SURE MADE MONKEYS OUT OF THE THREE TROUBLEMAKERS, AND WELL, THAT'S MY GRIM FAIRY TALE FOR THIS ISSUE. OF COURSE, AS IN ALL FAIRY TALES, EVEN GRIM ONES, EVERYBODY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER. YEP, SEEMS THE KING WENT SHOPPING AND FOUND A



CHAMBER MAID MAKING BEDS ON THE THIRD FLOOR AND, OH, BUT THAT'S ANOTHER, EVEN GRIMMER TALE. WELL, O F. AWATS, SO, 'BYE, NOW!

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

WELL, HERE WE ARE... SPRING IS HERE, EH, FINEST? IT'S BASEBALL TIME AGAIN. WELL, I'VE GOT A BASEBALL HORROR YARN THAT WILL DRIVE YOU BAFLE. SO CREEP INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR, SETTLE DOWN ON THAT BAGG, AND YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER WILL PITCH YOU THE BLOOD-CURLING, SPINE-TINGLING, FEARFUL FURBO-FABLE I CALL...

FOUL PLAY!

IT IS MIDNIGHT... THE EVE OF GRIMESDAY. CENTRAL CITY'S DUSK-LEAGUE BALL PARK LIES IN DARKNESS. THERE IS A SMELL OF FRESHLY PAINTED SEATS AND PAIRS AND HOT-DOG STAMPS HANGING IN THE COOL NIGHT AIR. THE CHAMPIONSHIP PERNANT SAGS LIMPLY FROM THE NEW-WHITENED FLAGPOLE IN THE OUTFIELD, LIFTING SLEAZY NOW AND THEN TO FLAP IN THE SOFT BREEZE THAT SWEEPS IN AND ACROSS THE SILENT DESERTED GRANDSTANDS. BUT DOWN ON THE GREEN PLAYING FIELD, ILLUMINATED BY THE COLD MOONLIGHT, ARE FIGURES... FIGURES IN BASEBALL UNIFORMS... EACH IN ITS POSITION... WAITING... WAITING FOR THE WORDS...

PLAY BALL!



WHAT GOODEN, YOU ASK? WHY THIS MIDNIGHT GAME IN THE MOONLIT CENTRAL CITY BALL PARK? COME BACK WITH ME TO LAST SEASON... TO THE FINAL DAYS OF THE DUSK-LEAGUE PERNANT RACE... TO A BRISK SEPTEMBER AFTERNOON. DRY BROWNED LEAVES, CHASED BY A FALL WIND THAT CARRIED A PREVIEW OF WINTER WITH ITS CHILL, TUMBLED ACROSS BATTLE'S BALL PARK AS CENTRAL CITY'S STANFISCHER STRUCK TO THE PLATE...

O'NOON, HONKIE! LET'S GET SOME NON-INSURANCE!

GET ON BASE, HERBIE BOY!



IT WAS THE PLAYOFF GAME BETWEEN CENTRAL CITY AND BAYVILLE. THE TWO TEAMS HAD ENDED THE SEASON TIED FOR FIRST PLACE AND THIS GAME WOULD DECIDE THE PERMANENT WINNER. VISITING CENTRAL CITY WAS LEADING THEIR BAYVILLE HOSTS BY ONE PRECIOUS RUN IN THE FIRST OF THE NINTH. THERE WERE TWO OUT AS HERBIE SATTEEN CAME TO BAT...



BAYVILLE'S HURLER WOUND UP. HIS HERBIE WATCHED AS THE PITCH CAME STEAMING IN...



THE PITCH WAS IN. HERBIE MOVED TOWARD IT, THEN TURNED AWAY. THE BALL STRUCK HIS FLECK.



THE BAYVILLE TEAM CROWDED AROUND THE UMPIRE, PROTESTING HIS CALL...



THE UMPIRE JUST SHOOK HIS HEAD. HIS DECISION STOOD. HERBIE TROTTERED DOWN TO FIRST, AND CENTRAL CITY'S LEAD-OFF MAN CAME TO THE PLATE...



BAYVILLE'S PITCHER, PHIL GRASS, WOUND UP. SUDDENLY, HERBIE, ON FIRST, DID SOMETHING STRANGE FOR A BIG HULKING BOY. HE MADE A BREAK FOR SECOND BASE...



PHIL SPUN AROUND AND LET GO. JERRY DESSAN, BAYVILLE'S SECOND BASEMAN AND STAR PLAYER, LEANER LEADER IN HITS AND HOME RUNS, WAS COOKING. THE PEB WAS WAY AHEAD OF HERBIE, BUT HERBIE CAME IN SLIDING, SPIKES HIGH...



JERRY DEEGAN WENT DOWN AS THE SPINES SLASHED INTO HIS CALF, AND HE FELT THEIR BURNING METAL SHARPNESS. HIS TEAMMATES WERE RUNNING NOW.



JERRY GOT TO HIS FEET. HE LOOKED DOWN AT HIS TORN SWEAT SOX AND THE TINY TRICKLE OF SCARLET OZZING FROM THE SPIKE-WOUND...



THE BIG CENTRAL CITY PITCHER SMIRKED...

IT'S ALL IN THE GAME CHUM. IF I'M DEEGAN'S DROPPED THE BALL, I'D BE SAFE!



THE UMPIRE CALLED 'PLAY BALL,' AND THE GAME RESUMED. CENTRAL CITY, STILL LEADING BY ONE RUN, TOOK TO THE FIELD. CENTRAL'S FIRST BASE COACH WALKED BATTEN TO THE MOUND.

I DIDN'T GIVE YOU NO STEAL SIGN, BATTEN! WHAT WAS THE IDEAT?



I'M BAYVILLE'S BIGGEST, BIG WHITE TIGER! I'VE CLEANED DEEGAN'S SPIKE WOUNDS AND TAPED IT...

IS HE OKAY, OGG? WILL HE BE ABLE TO BAT?

SURE! JUST A SLIGHT CUT!



NOW IT WAS THE LAST OF THE NINTH. A HOME RUN WOULD TIE THE GAME FOR BAYVILLE, AND WITH ONE ON, IT WOULD MEAN HISTORY AND THE PENNANT. AND JERRY DEEGAN WAS DUE TO BAT FOURTH. THE FIRST BATTER STRODE TO THE PLATE...

GET ON, AL! JUST GET ON. JERRY'LL PUT ONE INTO THE STANDS!



BUT AL GROUNDED SAGELY TO SHORT. ONE OUT. THE SECOND BATTER MOVED INTO THE BOX...

WAIT 'M OUT, BILL! HE'S TIRIN'!



BUT BILL POPPED OUT TO RIGHT. FIND OUT THE
THIRD BATTER STEPPED INTO THE BATTER'S BOX...



"G'AW, MOLLY..."

LET'S FAS ONE, MEL...

YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD, JERRY!

I'M... DEAT...

HELPING BATTEN WORKED... PUMPED... DELIVERED... MEL
SWUNG AT THE FIRST PITCH LIVING IT TO SELF LEFT...



IT'S GOOD FOR TWO, MEL!

SET LEAD, MEL...

SLIDE, MEL...

THE CROWD ROARED. MEL PULLED
UP AT SECOND. IN THE DUGOUT, BAY-
VILLE'S BOYS WERE ON THEIR FEET.
ALL BUT JERRY DEAN...



THIS IS IT! LET'S GO,
YOU'RE THROUGH, JERRY!

JERRY! HERE'S OUR
CHANCE!

JERRY!
YOU'RE UP!

JERRY'S EYES WERE GLASSY. BRADY
SHOOK HIM...



HMP!

YOU'RE UP, JERRY!

"BATTER, JERRY!"

JERRY GOT TO HIS FEET... SLOWLY.
THE DUGOUT STEPS REELLED AS HE
STUMBLE, UP...



I'M... I'M
OKAY! JUST...
FELT A LITTLE...
DIZZY...

BLAST ONE INTO THE
BLEACHERS, JERRY!

JERRY MOVED TO THE BAT RACK... SLOWLY... PAINTFULLY.
HE BOUNCED HALO, SEARCHING...



SOMETHING'S WRONG
WITH HIM!

HE CAN'T EVEN
FIND HIS
BAT...

LET'S GO,
BATTER...

FINALLY, FINDING HIS FAVORITE MOOD, JERRY MOVED
INTO THE BATTER'S BOX. HE STARED OUT AT BATTEN
WHO WAS PUMPKING... DELIVERING...



ST-E-BKE
ONE!

ATTA BOY
HERBIE!

G'AW, JERRY...

JERRY HADN'T EVEN SEEN THE PITCH SPEED PAST
HIM... ||

THE SECOND PITCH WAS SLOW, STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE. REAL HOME RUN HEAT. JERRY SEEMED TO SENSE IT AND SWUNG WILDLY...



ST-LEE-RIKE TWO!

SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM, I TELL YOU HE MISSED IT BY A MILE.

TO JERRY, IT WAS GETTING DARK. HE COULD HARDLY MAKE OUT BATTEN'S UNIFORM AS HE PUNCHED THEM.



HE SLUMPED TO THE GROUND AS BATTEN'S PITCH WENT BY...



STRIKE THREE! YER... OUT...

NEW!

HE'S FAINTED!

THE BALL GAME WAS OVER. CENTRAL CITY HAD WON THE CHAMPIONSHIP! DOC WHITE RUSHED TO DEEGAN'S SIDE AS THE REST OF THE BAYVILLE TEAM CROWDED AROUND.



HE... HE'S DEAD!

THE PLER WAS EMPTY NOW. BAYVILLE'S BROKEN-HEARTED FANS HAD FILED SILENTLY OUT. IN THE PRESS-BOX ROOM, JERRY DEEGAN'S BODYLAY ON THE SUB-DOWN TABLE. DOC WHITE BENT OVER HIM...



IT MUST HAVE BEEN HIS HEART!

FOUR DEEGAN!

HE WAS THE... CHOKER... THE GREATEST!

THEN, DOC WHITE'S FACE BLANCHED. HE GOT UPSET... WITH NEEDLES AND BOTTLES AND RUBBER TUBES. DEEGAN'S TEAMMATES WATCHED SILENTLY. FINALLY, THE DOC SPOKE HIS VOICE WAS MUFFY... GUM...



IT... IT HURT HIS HEART! WHAT? YOU SURE, DOC?

YOU SURE, DOC?

YOU SURE, DOC?

...GUSTIVE! HE DIED FROM A QUICK ACTING POISON WHICH, ONCE IT ENTERED YOUR BLOODSTREAM, KILLED YOU WITHIN FIFTEEN MINUTES!



BUT JERRY WAS OUT ON THE FIELD FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE HE DIED.

SHUT! HE... HE... GOOD LORD!

FOR A MOMENT, IT WAS SO QUIET IN THE BATVILLE DRESSING ROOM, YOU COULD HEAR A PIN DROP. THEN...

BATTEN: HE KNEW THAT IF **HERBIE** **BATTEN** **JERRY** CAME UP IN THE **NINTH**, IT WOULD BEAR THE SAME!

THAT CRAZY MOVE! THAT STEAL! HE HAD NO CHANCE TO MAKE IT.

BATTEN SPIKED JERRY DELIBERATELY!

MURDERED HIM WITH...

POISONED SPIKES!

THE VISITING TEAM LOCKER ROOM WAS DESERTED. CENTRAL CITY'S BOYS, INCLUDING BATTEN, HAD GONE. ONLY THE TRAINER WAS LEFT...EMPTYING THE LOCKERS, AND PACKING THE EQUIPMENT AWAY...

WHICH LOCKER'D **HERBIE BATTEN** USE, NOW?

THAT ONE. HIS STUFF'S STILL IN IT...

WHILE THE OTHER PLAYERS KEPT NOSE, THE TRAINER, BUSY, DOC WHITE MADE A FAST CHECK ON BATTEN'S SPIKES. LATER, BACK AT THE BATVILLE DRESSING ROOM...

THERE'S NO COVER ABOUT IT! **BATTEN'S** OWN MURDERER. TRACES OF THE POISON ARE STILL ON HIS SPIKES.

THIS IS A JOB FOR THE POLICE.

NO WAIT! LET'S TAKE CARE OF HIM OURSELVES. OUR WAY...

YES, FRIENDS, **HERBIE BATTEN** HAD SO WANTED TO WIN THE PERMANENT **NOT** FOR **CENTRAL CITY** BUT FOR HIS OWN FAT EGO, THAT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINTH, WHILE HIS TEAM WAS AT BAT, HE'D PAINTED HIS SPIKES WITH THE FAST-ACTING POISON. HE'D CARRIED THE POISON WITH HIM FOR JUST SUCH AN OCCASION, GETTING AWAY WITH THE PITCH WAS EASY. THE SLIDE, EASIER, AND THE JOB WAS DONE. AND ALL LAST WINTER, **HERBIE** THOUGHT HE'D BATTEN AWAY WITH IT. HE'D PITCHED HIS TEAM TO VICTORY AND THE PERMANENT HE'D BEEN DECLARED A **GOAT**. SOON IT WOULD BE THE **DIS-LEAGUED** FOR HIM. SOON, HE'D BE **FAMOUS**. HE'D HAVE A NAME, A NAME IMMORTALIZED IN THE ANNALS OF BASEBALL. THAT'S WHY, ON THE DAY BEFORE OPENING DAY...



... WHEN THE LETTER ARRIVED, HE FELL FOR THE IMITATION...

DEAR MR. BATTEN, WE ARE A GROUP OF YOUR MOST AVID FOLLOWERS. IT IS OUR PLAN TO PLACE IN CENTRAL CITY BALL PARK A PLAQUE, CARRYING YOUR NAME, TO HONOR YOU AND YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN BASEBALL. PLEASE MEET US TONIGHT AT ELEVEN P.M. AT THE FIELD TO HELP DECIDE UPON WORDING AND PLACEMENT OF SAID TABLET. THE HONORARY BATTEN COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE



HERBIE WENT. WHY NOT? THIS WAS WHAT HE WANTED ABOVE ALL ELSE. THIS WAS WHAT HE'D **MURDERED** FOR. HONOR. PRESTIGE. AT 11:00 P.M., HE WAS IN THE DESERTED BALL PARK, ON THE MOONLIT FIELD, WAITING...

HELLO, **HERBIE**...

WHAT THE...? **BRADY**? **DOC WHITE**? THE **BATVILLE** TEAM. WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?



SO NOW YOU KNOW, FRIENDS. NOW YOU KNOW WHY THERE IS A BALL GAME BEING PLAYED IN THE MOONLIGHT AT MIDNIGHT IN THE DESERTED CENTRAL CITY BALL PARK. LOOK *CLOSELY*. SEE THIS *STRANGE BASEBALL GAME*? SEE THE LONG STRINGS OF FULPY INTESTINES THAT MARK THE BASE LINES. SEE THE TWO LUNGS AND THE LIVER THAT INDICATE THE BASES...THE HEART THAT IS HOME PLATE. SEE DOC WHITE BOND AND WHISKY THE HEART WITH THE MANDY SCALP, TELLING...



SEE THE BATTER COME TO THE PLATE SWINGING THE LEGS, THE ARMS, THEN THROWING ALL BUT ONE ARM AND STANDING IN THE BOX WAITING FOR THE PITCHER TO HIT THE HEAD IN TO HIM. SEE THE CATCHER WITH THE TORSO STAMPED ON AS A CHEST-PROTECTOR, THE INFIELDERS WITH THEIR HAND-MITS, THE STOMACH-NORN-BAG, AND ALL THE OTHER PIECES OF EQUIPMENT THAT ONCE WAS CENTRAL CITY'S STAR PITCHER, HENRY SATTEN...



AND IN THE MORNING, WATCH THE FACES OF THE FANS AS THEY PACK THE PARK AND SEE THE GREEN GRASS NOW STAINED RED, AND SEE THE HASTILY SUBSTITUTED PITCHER STEP TO THE RUBBER AND STARE DOWN AT THE STONE PLACQUE EMBEDDED THERE WITH THE ENGRAVED WORDS MEMORIALIZING THE GORY REMAINS BURIED BENEATH THE PITCHER'S MOUND.



HEH, HEH! SO THAT'S MY HELP-
FURN FOR THIS GORE, SIDDIES.
BEHIE, THE PITCHER, WENT TO
FLEES THAT NIGHT AND WAS TAKEN
OUT, OUT OF EXISTENCE, THAT IS!
THE FLUDGE TURNED OUT TO BE NO
GRAVE STONE, AND THE PITCHER'S
BROOD HIS GRAVE. OH, BY THE
WAY, NEXT TIME YOU GO SEE CENTRAL
CITY PLAY, BE CAREFUL WHERE
YOU SIT, THAT NIGHT
ONE OF BRYVILLE'S
BOYS HIT A WOMAN,
INTO THE STANDS.
THEY NEVER FOUND
THE...HEH, HEH...
'BALL!' 'BYE, NOW
WE'LL ALL SEE YOU
NEXT IN MY MIND,
TALES FROM THE
GRIFT!



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